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OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY

HITLER'S attack on the Soviet Union presents England with an immense opportunity. If Russia's resistance is prolonged and if that opportunity is seized and utilised to the full, the entire outlook of the war may be changed in our favour.

Mr. Churchill's speech on Sunday night was a great and historic event. He had already given broad hints to the world in former speeches that a German-Soviet war was imminent, and he had conveyed his conclusion in personal messages to Stalin. He was thus fully prepared for Hitler's war and able to define the British Government's attitude without a moment's delay. The effect of his speech—and we wish that all our propaganda could profit by the lesson—was a hundred times as great as it would have been if it had come after a period which could be interpreted as hesitation.

In his broadcast Mr. Churchill missed none of the essential points. First he emphasised the really extraordinary perfidy of Hitler's latest change of front. In every former case when Hitler has attacked a neutral country he has been able to trump up some spurious case of law or provocation to justify himself. But it is less than two years since he made a pact of friendship with Stalin, loudly declaring that the pact was "eternal," and since that date Russia has scrupulously maintained a neutrality that was benevolent to Germany. Hitler now relies for his propaganda on reviving the ancient anti-Bolshevik bogey. In so doing he has allayed the very fear he hopes to stimulate; for all the world is now convinced that Hitler has embarked on a career of conquest which, as Mr. Churchill says, no doubt envisages the control of India and China as well as the conquest of Europe and the Americas.

By emphasising Hitler's treachery, Mr. Churchill scotched the danger that the professional anti-Bolshevik here, and more especially in the United States, would attempt once again to urge peace with Hitler on the grounds that he was the leader of an anti-Bolshevik crusade. The Hearst newspapers in the United States seem now the only important source of publicity to fall for this blatant and dangerous nonsense. Secondly, Mr. Churchill went far to wipe out the past. He indulged in no recriminations and said nothing to invite them. Ideologically a bitter anti-Communist himself, he appealed to everyone not to waste time now in ideologies or in mutual reproaches, but to realise that, since England and Russia are now both fighting Hitler, we have become partners in the joint enterprise of defeating the Nazis. So far, response to this appeal has been good in the United States, which offers, like Britain, all aid to the Soviet Union, while the Poles offer terms of possible reconciliation which may sound academic now, but which may be the basis for better relations in the future. The Japanese have not yet declared themselves: Hitler double-crossed them with the Soviet pact in 1939; he has double-double-crossed them now after encouraging them also to make a pact with the U.S.S.R a few weeks ago. Finland proclaiming its neutrality is used as a German base.

Finally, Mr. Churchill reminded us that though the attack on Russia might give us a few weeks or months of comparative quiet in this island, Hitler would turn back to the West at the first opportunity to throw the whole of his power against Britain. From this warning two morals follow immediately. To help the Soviet Union is also to help ourselves. Economic collaboration is already being planned; a military mission is leaving for Russia. The R.A.F. is utilising the opportunity when Hitler's best pilots and machines are in the East of Europe to press home its attack on Germany's aerodromes and productive centres with greater intensity. The results show that Britain has for the moment the command of the air over the Channel coast. In this war there are no frontiers; the true frontier of Germany is her advanced aerodromes. It should be possible to put these out of action and to cause irrevocable havoc to Germany's industrial plants.

The second lesson is that our production at home ought to be greatly increased in the coming months. That the figures of production have been bad in recent weeks is common knowledge. The chief causes, as we argue elsewhere, are the difficulties of adapting a profit system to war production, grave deficiencies in planning, peace-

time habits and muddle in the Civil Service and in managerial methods. To these we must add lack of enthusiasm, in itself partly the result of the waste of skilled man-power amongst the workers themselves. The Government must use the chance to remedy these inefficiencies and the fact that the Soviet Union, which in the minds of millions remains the symbol of the workers' State, is now fighting on the same side as ourselves against a common enemy should have an electric effect in the factories and workshops. It also presents our propagandists a unique opportunity of rallying our future allies on the Continent and of exploiting the ideological conflict in Germany, which Hitlerism has suppressed but which it cannot destroy.

The Military Odds

From a military point of view the odds in the Russo-German war are as incalculable as the German High Command's strategic objectives. If Hitler is to be placed by September in the position of being able to choose between two alternatives, each probably attractive to him—a "peace offensive" backed by evidence of German impregnability, or an attack on Britain by his entire striking force—the German armies must achieve two results. They must destroy the Russian armies mobilised west of Moscow and obtain control of the Baku oilfields as compensation for the immense drain on Germany's oil stocks which the Eastern campaign will involve.

What are the chances, and what is the German plan of campaign likely to be? Numerically there is little to choose between the opposing forces; but this war has shown that quality of material, not numbers of bayonets, is the deciding factor, and in this respect—both on land and in the air—Germany holds in all probability the advantage. Nevertheless, the task which confronts the German High Command is formidable. So far as can be judged, the invasion is being launched along four main lines—through the Baltic States against Leningrad, from Warsaw towards Minsk and Moscow, from Rawa Ruska in the direction of Kiev, and from Rumania against Odessa. According to the German wireless, the Luftwaffe has scored initial successes against Russian advanced aerodromes and grounded aircraft on a scale comparable with the results achieved in 1939 against Poland; but the Russian air force also claims large successes. It is in any case incomparably stronger than the Polish, distances are enormous, and the armies of the U.S.S.R., unlike those of Poland, are highly mechanised and fully prepared for the new type of mobile warfare.

It may be accepted as probable that German Panzer divisions will succeed in forcing a way into Russia; but unless Russian communications and supplies are thrown into such disorder that their armies lose cohesion and ability to manoeuvre, where is the quick, decisive victory which Hitler must secure if his ulterior autumn plans are to mature? Presumably Hitler hopes to smash the whole organisation of the Russian machine—and organisation and communications are probably Russia's weakest point—and set up Quisling Governments in the Ukraine and elsewhere. If he can smash the Russian armies north of Kiev, and can contain their remnants with relatively small forces in the quadrilateral whose points are Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov and Vologda, he may stake everything on the seizure of Odessa and Sevastopol for use as bases for an air and sea-borne attack on Batoum, and thence against Baku and Iran. Such may be the German objectives; whether they can be achieved or not may ultimately depend on the internal cohesion of the U.S.S.R. Russia's armies could retreat indefinitely and Russia remain a front which would drain Germany's resources; defeats matter little in comparison with the maintenance of resistance.

For us, Hitler's attack on Russia should prove to be a stroke of first-rate good fortune. It has given the R.A.F. a chance to hit hard at Western Germany by night, and to achieve impressive local superiority over Northern France by day. It affords time in which to complete and consolidate our occupation of Syria. It seems likely to hold temporarily in suspense the German drive towards the Nile from Libya, while in Ethiopia the last remnants of Italian resistance are being methodically overcome.

On the other hand, taking a longer view, we will do well to bear steadily in mind, first, that German preoccupation with the U.S.S.R. is unlikely to check the activities of U-boats and long-range bombers against our shipping, and, secondly, that if German *Blitz* tactics against the Russian armies are so successful that a single-front war against Britain can be waged in the autumn, with the Luftwaffe in its entirety concentrated in the west, our position will be most critical unless we make superhuman efforts during the next three months to increase the output of both trained pilots and munitions. Moreover, even if Hitler—successful against Russia, and master of the Baku oil—is baulked in a peace offensive and yet decides to defer invasion of Britain until 1942, German armies in occupation of Iran would constitute an ugly threat to our forces in the Middle East. The pincers menacing General Wavell would have become much larger.

The necessity for tighter and more efficient organisation of our Home Front is no whit less vital because Hitler's immediate attention is turned eastwards.

Reactions in the U.S.A.

American opinion has reacted to the invasion of Russia with speed. First came astonishment; the German threat had been more generally discounted as bluff there than here. Then the view spread that a respite on other fronts might be expected, and this crystallised into a determination, certainly expressed in newspapers and at Washington, to use the pause for intensified preparation by U.S.A. and Britain. The Government's policy shows no change, of course, save that Russian credits may be unfrozen. Isolationists will try to cash in on the holy horror of Bolshevism; but they can hardly disregard this crashing demonstration of just how much a Hitler treaty is worth. Meantime President Roosevelt has sent a message to Congress on the *Robin Moor*. This he defined as notice that "no American ships or cargo on any of the seven seas can consider itself immune from acts of piracy. . . . We are not yielding and we do not propose to yield."

The freezing of German and Italian funds in the United States, and the closing of their consulates and propaganda agencies, are concerted measures. The Axis assets, estimated at $300,000,000, are not, in terms of war expenditure, of enormous value. But they are the means which pay for a large variety of activities. There is ordinary espionage, particularly easy since a large proportion of German and Italian citizens of the States are bound to sympathise with their mother-countries. No formal suppression of the German American Bund can eliminate this. There has been a steady trickle of arrests, such as that of Dr. Frederick Ernest Auhagen, who masked his activities under the well-worn device of peddling obscene literature. The Dies Committee has been accused of greater zeal than discretion, but its indictment of Dr. Manfred Zapp, the director of the Transocean News Service, and Kertess, president of the Chemical Marketing Company of New York, was well founded. Transocean was subsidised by Mr. Hans Thomsen, the German Chargé d'Affaires at Washington; it is now to be closed, as are the Anglo-German Library of Information at New York, and the German Railroads Information Office; each of which spent money to the tune of $200,000 a year. Sabotage is organised along lines familiarised by von Papen and his crew in the last war. The time-bomb found last year in the *Republic*, the *Robin Moor* sunk at a point designed to impress Latin-American States, repeat the old technique. Industrial obstruction of the war effort is arranged by German control of patents, and of some industries, such as dyeing. There are many opportunities of influencing politics through movements which are unconscious of their role as tools of Germany. Funds were subscribed to Republican propaganda in the Presidential election; the most honest of isolationist and pacifist societies have apparently been supported by Dr. Goebbels because their propaganda worked for the time in the same direction. Italian propaganda in the States was under the direction of the experienced Luigi Villari, long attached to the Embassy in London; his mellifluous English will be wasted now.

The Home Front (*By an Industrial Correspondent*).

The resolution carried last Friday by the National Committee of the Engineers' Union does not mean that a majority of the members are in favour of peace with Hitler, or that they were in favour before Hitler made nonsense of their resolution by invading the Soviet Union. It does, however, mean that there is serious and growing discontent with the Government, and, above all, with the way things are going in the factories; and it does show that the Communists and their friends have, as usual, been adroit in using this discontent for their own purposes. The National Committee is not, as some people seem to suppose, a body of workshop delegates, but a regionally elected conference composed of men actually working at their trades, whereas the Executive Council consists in the A.E.U. exclusively of full-time officials—incidentally, a very bad arrangement, and a

standing invitation to rank and file rebellions against authority. Disgust at the way in which things are going in many of the factories aided the election of those candidates who had taken the lead in protest movements—and they naturally tended to be the men who were least held back by loyalty to the official Labour leaders. What the resolution indicates is the imperative need for a domestic clean-up of the whole structure of war industrial organisation. The grievance most felt of all is the craftsman's grievance that he is left idling on the job through faults of organisation. To this is added in some factories, especially in the aircraft industry, resentment at the continued sheer refusal of the managements to give any recognition to Trade Unionism inside the shops—a policy which converts the shop stewards into enemies, whereas they should be the most powerful auxiliaries of the management in speeding up production.

* * *

The grievances of the men who are kept idling about the shops, waiting for work, have a good deal to do with the increasing pressure for higher wages; for example, with the A.E.U.'s decision to press for a substantial advance. For this idling lowers earnings for piece-workers a long way below what they would get if they were fully employed. I do not suggest that this is, over industry as a whole, the main cause of the pressure; but it is undoubtedly an important contributing cause. The main cause, I should say, is discontent with the Government's economic policy, and disbelief in the view that the cost of living is being effectively stabilised. Indeed, everyone's personal experience proclaims that it is not, outside a narrow range of articles. The "gap" exists, and nothing can prevent it from causing price increases in every uncontrolled part of the market. It is easy enough for well-to-do persons to proclaim that, however heavily the rich are taxed, the war cannot be waged without lowering the living standards of the poor. This is perfectly true; but it is useless to expect the workers to see it as long as the class-system remains, to all outward appearances, entirely unmodified. Under the class system, it is inevitable that the workers will resent strongly the imposition of income tax on their earnings, and will continue to argue, as they have always done in the past, that wages must at least keep pace with prices. The experts may know that in fact this cannot possibly happen, because there are not enough goods to keep up the workers' standard of life. However often this is demonstrated, the workers, under the present system, will continue to argue that their safest course is to press for all the wages they can get, even if their real standard of living is bound to fall off. It will fall further, they think, if they do not extract all the wage increases they can. Nor, given the class structure and the "gap," is it at all demonstrable that they are wrong. The right way of changing their minds lies in a policy of wartime socialisation and general control of expenditure.

* * *

Mr. Bevin's coal broadcast appealed to ex-miners to return to the pits, unless they are doing highly skilled or key work. They will be secured continuity of employment. Some 50,000 men may thus go back into mining. Men serving in the forces are unaffected. The miners, said Mr. Bevin, had been given a square deal—the guaranteed week—and in return must increase production by 500,000 tons a week. Absenteeism must stop: offenders will be called up. This plan is not so inclusive as it sounds. The chief recall of miners will be from the ranks of heavy labourers, who are already short, and bottle-necking industry. Considering the state of the armaments industry, the decision not to release miners from the forces is unintelligible. Could not Mr. Bevin get the War Office to realise that production is at present a greater war requirement than the training of all able-bodied men? These sectional patchwork solutions generally aggravate rather than help the general position; which ought to be State control of industry, in which labour would participate, to secure maximum efficiency. Mr. Bevin last summer refused to mobilise man-power; now he is forced to conscribe labour unilaterally without being able to control entrepreneurs. A wage policy giving less pay for harder work to transferred labour is not calculated to produce efficiency.

* * *

Monthly statistics of shipping losses meet the same difficulties of accuracy as weekly ones. The revised total for April, of 581,000 tons, is the heaviest loss since the outbreak; and that of 461,328 tons for May, though it included losses in evacuation from Greece and Crete, is grave. Loss of shipping space from accidents, Admiralty requisitions, and temporary enemy damage do not enter these figures. Turn-round in ports and ship-repairing are speeding up, but are still hampered by bad organisation. Greater drive is needed for the production of anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns. Sir P. Bennet, author of the famous 1939 Dusseldorf agreement with Germany, has been already tried both in the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and his appointment to the key post in this work is astonishing. The whole of our economic war-strategy must be centred upon our scarcest factor, shipping space. So far, home production and imports have not been planned to this end. The Ministry of Agriculture is the main culprit. Our milk-cow stock is declining while our meat-cattle stock was higher in March than at the outbreak of the war. All but a fraction of the new acreage under cultivation has been used to grow fodder. This ultimately produces between a tenth and a twentieth of the food values which could be obtained by growing human food, especially oats and potatoes. The Ministry of Food is not much better. Whole-meal bread is still not compulsory. No potato-flour is mixed with bread. It is clear that a solution cannot be found without a complete reorganisation of the production and distribution of foodstuffs and a vast extension of communal feeding, accompanied by an appropriate wage policy and the grant of family allowances. The basic petrol ration must also be cut in order to enable us to keep tanker tonnage out of the danger zone as a reserve. We then could discontinue building tankers which ties up scarce shipbuilding capacity. As in other fields of war-economies the refusal to envisage the basic principles of organisation leads to dangerous weakness in dealing with vested interests, to an unwillingness to disclose facts and impose the necessary discipline and sacrifice on the population. It is to be hoped that the shipping debate which was held in secret will result in changes that are long overdue.

* * *

The builders are traditionally hostile to piecework—with good reason in normal times. But the case for piecework on the big government jobs of making aerodromes, camps, new war factories, and emergency houses and rest centres for blitzed workers is, I think, fully made out. It ought, however, not to be confined to the workers, but applied to the contractors as well. "Cost *plus*" is an utterly hopeless system, above all for building work. If it were entirely swept away, and the contractor paid a fixed price for the job—that is, a piecework price—it would be much easier to overcome the men's opposition. After all, squad piecework is habitual in many types of public works constructing; and its extension to big structural building jobs under present conditions is a matter of plain common sense.

Russia in the House (*By a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Members are unanimously behind the Government in its determination to do everything possible to aid Russian resistance to Germany. If there are Members who resent finding Britain on the same side as the Soviet Union, they have been dumb even in the smoke room. The Prime Minister's broadcast on Sunday night was prompt enough to prevent the growth of any feeling of the sort, and Members of all parties agreed that it was admirably timed and conceived. By his prompt and lofty appeal to the country to stand united behind Russia as the latest victim of Nazi aggression, he had defeated the disintegrating aims of Nazi propaganda about Communism, and had clearly defined Nazi aggression as the real menace to our civilisation and existence. He had given also a clear lead to America which had been promptly followed by the American Government. Members were particularly pleased at his warning to the country that Russia's entry into the war did not relieve us from still greater efforts on our own part.

Mr. Eden's statement to the House was felt to be innocuous; it fell far short of the great occasion it signalised. In the debate which followed both Hore-Belisha and Winterton lost ground with the House. Members remembered Hore-Belisha's demand during the Finnish campaign that we should go to war against Russia, and his attempt to dot the "I's" and cross the "T's" of the Government policy of aid to Russia failed to carry conviction. Churchill fairly rebuked Winterton for raising the position of Turkey, who, he said, should be asked to state clearly where she stood. In all parts of the House there was recognition of the very delicate and difficult position of Turkey, about which the least said the better. On this occasion Lees Smith and Percy Harris more truly expressed the feeling of the House. The Government had expressed its determination to give full aid to Russia.

On Wednesday the secret debate on shipping took place. Last week Shinwell was supported by the House when he protested against this debate being held in secret. The Prime Minister's insistence that he could not make the full statement which he wished if the debate were held in public, persuaded the House to agree to a secret session with not too good a grace.

Aneurin Bevan who has established a position for himself as an able parliamentary strategist, secured the promise of a two days' debate on production in the immediate future. Members are determined to use this occasion to awaken the country and the Government to the disturbing defects in our war organisation which are becoming more patent as days go by.

The debate on propaganda has been postponed because, it is known, the Cabinet has failed to reach agreement on what is required in the way of propaganda organisation and policy.

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A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN THE A.E.U.

DEAR J.,

Does the resolution adopted by the majority of delegates at the A.E.U. meeting on June 20th still hold good now that Germany has attacked Russia and Mr. Churchill has pledged all possible help to the Soviet Union? You may say that I don't understand anything about it in my comfortable office chair. Well, perhaps not, but I have your letters to guide me and you are always tolerant of my questions.

The A.E.U. delegates adopted six points of the programme of the People's Convention by a majority of 29 to 21. Let us look at these points. First, you want to stand up to the Government and employers about the standard of living and democratic rights of the workers. Well, I hope you will; that's your job. And then you demand "friendship with the Soviet Union." On that Mr. Churchill has gone even further than you ask. Of course, it is terribly late for Anglo-Soviet co-operation. But I suggest that we have no time to-day to waste on the mistakes of the Chamberlain Government or of Stalin. It is enough that we have got as much of an alliance with Soviet Russia as the strategic facts permit, and that in both countries there are now governments who know that they fight for national existence and must co-operate.

As you know, few people are more critical of the present British Government than I am; I should like to make it much more "popular" and to see it do many things which are necessary if this is really to be a People's War against Fascism. But beyond that do those who ask for "a People's Government" know what they mean? The Convention policy sounds to me exactly like an imitation of the P.O.U.M., which was so drastically suppressed by the Popular Front government in Spain with the full support and co-operation of the Communists. You saw then that a revolution in the middle of a war against Nazis and Fascists would be suicide. And then you ask for a "People's Peace" which certainly sounds nice. But peace to-day means either a Hitler conquest, which would be the peace of the grave, or it means the intermediary stage of a Pétain peace, which would have the same results in the end and which would mean the slavery of the workers from the beginning. There is no escape from these alternatives. You cannot believe that in the present circumstances any kind of peace, whether due to a revolution or not, would produce a revolution in Germany and so lead to international Socialism. You know as well as I do that it would just mean conquest by the Nazi machine.

I doubt if many of those who support these slogans, which are all attractive enough in themselves, are doctrinaires who are really prepared for a policy of revolutionary defeatism, especially now that they see that the only result would be to help the Nazis to conquer Russia. They are anti-Fascists who fear that in the war we are being led towards Fascism, distrust their employers and the ruling class as a whole, and find plenty of things in their daily life to confirm their worst suspicions. It is difficult to gather from a number of those who support the People's Convention whether their grievance is that they cannot stop the war, or that we are not fighting it hard enough. They urge all sorts of improvements in the organisation for war; they ask the State to socialise the land and take over factories and the rest of it, and then they ask for a People's Peace. This demand by the workers for more efficient production is a new development. In the last war there was perpetual conflict in the factories about wages and conditions. In this war, though there are such conflicts, the usual story is of workmen who bitterly complain that their employers are holding up production and paying them for nothing when they want to get on with the job of producing munitions.

I have just been reading a book called *Strange Fighters, We British** which describes much of what is going on in some of the factories. The author is a daily journalist, with a "popular" style, who knows the inside story. Some, of course, are producing fast. In others there is idleness, discontent and inefficiency. For this employers blame workmen who, they say, absent themselves from work when they have made enough money, while the Trade Unions reply that it is the management's peace-time outlook, profit-making minds and bad administration that slows down production. From Mr. Trevor Evans's account, which confirms many others that reach me, I should say that in this complicated situation there is a very small percentage of deliberate slowing up by Communists; a very much larger percentage of anger that the management should waste the work of skilled men; a further, still larger, percentage of sheer muddle due to the difficulty of planning capitalism; and that the remainder is to be accounted for by the grievances of workers and the mentality of employers who do not understand the function of a Trade Union in a modern factory. Trevor Evans gives examples of all these troubles. There is the story of the works canteen where the prices were sharply increased overnight and where the management refused to admit that the workers, who were dependent on the canteen, had the right even to query this surprising jump in their cost of living. That skilled labour is wasted by managerial inefficiency there is ample proof in this book and elsewhere. Complaints about it reach every newspaper office, are sent to Whitehall and circulate in the House of Commons; they show that sometimes it is the workers who are keen on the job and the employers who are not so keen. Mr. Trevor Evans gives an obviously truthful account of conversations with shop stewards. Sometimes they effectively control decisions in the workshop. They can call a protest strike any day they like. He found that Communists were often leaders, just because Communists had more energy and determination than other people; that these leaders were also admirable craftsmen, furious at the slowness of production, anxious to fight Hitler, but convinced that our present half-planned private contracting system could never be efficient, and that anyway the Government and the employing class were spiritually and mentally incapable of successfully fighting Fascism.

Here is a terribly dangerous situation. It is all too reminiscent of what happened in France. Our hope of winning this war is to make the best use of the time while Hitler is occupied in the East. As far as bombing goes the R.A.F. seem ready enough to oblige. But the chance of following up these attacks and of being able to meet the threat when Hitler turns back again to the West, obviously depends on the highest possible production here. Some of you talk of people in this country who want to accept the advice of Hess and make a treaty with Hitler now that he has gone to war with Russia. I think Churchill has scotched that snake. No one can honestly suspect this Government of intending to sell out to Hitler. There is, of course, a real danger that a less resolute Government may take the place of this one if things go sufficiently badly. That depends on production and whether the workers and capitalists are both determined to resist. If the workers are talking of a "people's peace" the chances of avoiding the fate of France do not seem too good. Obviously, the best chance is to welcome Churchill's unequivocal declaration of support for Russia and by your energy both in the factory and outside it show that the help can be real and efficient.

You reply, perhaps, that I am suggesting a mere passive acquiescence in a social and industrial system that just won't work and which is plunging to disaster? I am not, because I believe you have the chance of a century to help in defeating Fascism now. The defeatist elements are not in control in England to-day: if you press for a constructive programme of the highest production you will automatically expose the waste and inefficiency of capitalism, and this Government, which is completely committed to this war, may be prevailed upon to make great changes which will be distasteful to many employers, but which are absolutely necessary for winning the war. But you must show that your demands are really directed to obtaining efficiency. You have to put pressure on employers to increase production and find ways of exerting this pressure which do not themselves involve stoppages of work and decrease in production. Why not demand that your factory committees should have a say in both the technical and human side of factory management; why not put forward a practical and attainable programme of industrial reorganisation in order to win the war? You will not find it difficult to obtain a hearing in the press, in special reports, through your M.P.s, through the National Committee on Expenditure. You will find all the technicians and scientists in agreement with you when you ask for a proper use of your skill. Make it clear that you do intend to win this war and that, provided they will make the necessary changes in this out of date system, you will support Mr. Churchill and his colleagues, because, whatever their other limitations, they do mean business in fighting Nazism. Why not concentrate on demanding all the time an increase of production so that Britain may wage more efficient war against the Nazis, and thereby more effectively help the U.S.S.R.? I suggest that you need another special delegates conference, in which you reconsider your decision of last week, express your welcome of Mr. Churchill's attitude towards Russia, and urge upon the country the need of more efficient production for a war which you now have an unmistakable chance of turning into a People's War. This remains, as it has always been, the hope of

Yours ever

THE EDITOR, *N.S. & N.*

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* *Strange Fighters, We British.* By Trevor Evans (Hale 3/6).

THE EASTERN AIR

[*From a Correspondent*]

MIDSUMMER has been chosen by Hitler for his attack on Russia in the expectation that the Luftwaffe can blast the Soviet air force from the daylight skies while the short Northern nights prevent the relatively slow Russian bombers from making night attacks. Further south, the limited range of the Soviet machines ensures that industrial Germany cannot be bombed unless the Russian army can force forward the bases of the air force. Like one of his own screaming bombs, Hitler has fallen on the Russians in order to demoralise, destroy and silence. As usual, his attack has begun with an air offensive against airfields and aircraft factories.

On the composition and situation of the Russian aircraft industry he is well informed, as Reichswehr collaboration with the industry extended over the years of Germany's demilitarisation. Junkers, Heinkel, Dornier and Rohrbach helped in its development. Up to last year, the links remained so close that the assistants of Kaganovitch, Commissar for the Aircraft Industry, were important members of Molotov's suite during his visit to Berlin. The Russian technique of gliding and parachute jumping was studied by the Nazis, not in Germany, but in Russia.

In 1933, the German technical dominance in the Russian aircraft industry was superseded by American influence, and the Russian air force of to-day is largely based on American prototypes. In August, 1940, a display of six new fighters and bombers was given at Tushino Aerodrome to foreign air attachés. The performance of these machines were not published, but they were no doubt the prototypes of those which Voroshilov had referred to in 1939 when he said that the speed of Russian service fighters had been raised to 500 km.h. (312 miles per hour), and their ceiling to 15,000 m. (49,500 ft.). These figures are in excess of those published for older types like the I-15 " Chato " biplane and the I-16 " Rata " monoplane, both designed for manoeuvrability rather than for speed. The Chato is rated at 223 miles per hour, with a ceiling of 39,600 ft. and the Rata at 285 miles per hour, with a ceiling of 31,500 ft. Both types are, in fact, relatively slow and their armament, four machine guns, is relatively light. Of bombers, the Ant-3 is the most famous. It weighs 20 tons, and has a range of 1,242 miles (Moscow–Berlin return), but is slow. Its maximum speed is 161 miles per hour—effective enough by night but a prey for Messerschmitts by day. The light bomber, known as the SB2, is a development of the American Glenn Martin 139 and has a speed of 263 miles per hour, a range of 1,428 miles, and carries a ton and a quarter of bombs. The Russians have paid extremely high prices to the Americans for prototypes and licence rights to manufacture, but the development of fast light bombers will be of greater use to them against the Germans than the heavy Junkers derivatives whose construction the Germans encouraged. The performance of the Vultee V-K, which is also in production, is not published, but it appears to be a form of the American Vultee dive-bomber known in the R.A.B. as the Vultee Vengeance. The Nazis will yet have a taste of dive-bombing on the Eastern Front.

The industry has been re-organised by American technicians for rapid production by semi-skilled labour. Repetition tools are used, where possible, and women play a large part in production. Workers are also encouraged to become airmen and airwomen. Thus, a deep reserve of flying as well as productive skill has been built up. Dispersal of plant has always been a principle of Russian industrial planning, and the distribution of the industry in Moscow, Voronezh, Gorki, Fili, Taganrog, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Khimki, Penza, Samara, Kiev and Sebastopol, suggests that it will not be knocked out in a fortnight's blitz. Design, scientific research and building of prototypes are also distributed under the control of appropriate institutes, far from the lunge of the Luftwaffe.

The Russian air force is organised under Timoshenko, People's Commissar for Defence, but naval aviation is a separate branch. Hitler himself stated that before the war Russia had the largest air force in the world. Its size is important in relation to night bombing; its quality will be decisive in the struggle for daytime supremacy. According to Voroshilov, 20,000 men are trained yearly for the air force. The pilots are usually Party members, and the skill, combined with idealistic courage which they showed in Spain and China, has been favourably commented on by German military observers in " Luftwehr."

The Russians claim to have 100,000 parachute troops, excluding special air-borne troops. This figure seems to be conservative when one remembers that the Ossoviachim (the Society for Defence Against Chemical and Air Attack), which has a membership of over 15,000,000, encourages a high proportion of its members during their pre-military training to become parachute jumpers. Flying and parachute jumping in the Soviet Union is not something that only other people do; it would be hard to find any family in Russia of which at least one member had not made a parachute jump from the fixed experimental tower to be found in almost every village and town.

The difficulties of road communication and rail transport has fostered air transport. The Reichswehr has merely demonstrated the lessons in ferrying troops which the Russian air force gave it. The towing of glider trains is a Soviet invention, and has been in operation for years in the Eastern provinces for the transport of industrial goods. The pupil has learned the lesson, but has yet to thrash the master.

The supplying of Russia's air force with raw material for replacements and fuel for operations, is easier for her than for the Luftwaffe. In 1940, Russia increased her imports of manganese from the U.S.A. to 39,000 tons—double the import of 1939—and it is assumed that part of this, at least, was reconsigned to Germany. Russia's most recent crime in Hitler's eyes was to delay delivery of reconsignments of manganese and aviation oil. The lovely Black Sea coast, more beautiful than the French Riviera, has long been prepared for the oil battle. Even in 1935, practice blackouts were regularly held; the youths and girls of the Ossoviachim marched along the boulevards of the holiday coast singing of the fate that awaited the invaders. The Russians are inured to the thought of air raids. Gas drill and A.R.P. exercises have taken place regularly—directed in the pre-war years to resist sudden attack by Hitler. A screen of fighter aerodromes and anti-aircraft batteries defends the towns. According to Voroshilov, there are 400 anti-aircraft batteries co-operating in Army and Home Defence. Leningrad, although extremely vulnerable to air attack from Finland, is a city mainly of stone houses and tenements and basements, unlike Moscow which still has immense numbers of wooden houses. Leningrad may be taken by military action. Unsupported air action, unless the Luftwaffe can clear the Baltic skies of the Russian air force and then make a Rotterdam of Leningrad, will scar its buildings, but not cow its inhabitants who are not too old to remember their resistance to Kornilov and his German supporters in 1918.

The spirit of Alexander Nevsky who drove the murdering knights of the Teutonic Order from Pskov and Russian soil, lives on in Russian workers, peasants and cossacks. They will not be taken by surprise when the Luftwaffe attacks; the crucial question is whether they will give Stalin what in peacetime they might have denied him—a devotion to death.

A LONDON DIARY

"HITLER has signed his death warrant this time," a newsvendor said to me in the street as I made my way to catch an early train on Sunday morning. I glanced down at the paper. " No, it's not there," he said, " it came in after the Sunday papers had all gone to press. Germany attacked Russia this morning." In the railway carriage I tried out the effect of my bombshell. No one seemed very excited. " Well," said one man, " that ought to do us a bit of good," and went on looking through the results of greyhound racing. " There speaks the great British public," I said to myself. " They don't mind whether it is Bolshevik Russia or another Fascist state as long as it is another army against Hitler. Hitler will be wrong if he thinks England will fall for any anti-Bolshie business now, though some people may secretly want to. If Churchill hits the right note to-night the whole situation will change. But change for the better if Russia is over-run ? " Of course, if I believed the Communists or Mr. Shaw, Russia is entirely invincible. So much so that even after the Turkish Pact had made Germany's intentions quite obvious, the official Soviet people were still quite unalarmed, while leading Communists said all this stuff about Germany attacking Russia was just so much " poppycock " and " British propaganda." You cannot conceive how superior and certain they were about it ! At night came Mr. Churchill's speech with its completely definite and unhesitating pledge. The Communists have tied themselves in so many knots that another knot will not make much difference. The line taken by Mr. Pritt suggests that the war ceased to be an Imperialist War at dawn on Sunday morning. But one well-known member of the Party writes to say that some members of the British Cabinet and upper classes must have fallen for Hess's official and unofficial peace suggestions; that Hess told the Government that Germany would attack Russia (which may well be the case) and that at the proper moment some people still hope to " switch the war." Well, if that did happen it would not be because anyone here is any longer deluded about the

meaning of a pact of friendship with Hitler; it would only happen if our position was desperate. Which suggests that the Communists might well adopt a line they should always have taken—"win the war for the People." They need not fear the Blimps just now; their swords are positively leaping from their scabbards. The story goes round the Ministry of Information that Lord Davidson, the famous manager of Lord Baldwin's Conservative Party, usually comes into the Ministry wearing a pink rose. On Monday, it is said, he wore a red rose.

* * *

The debate on propaganda and the Ministry of Information is again postponed; the Service Departments are still unwilling, I gather, to give the Ministry power to do its job. The only new information about the Ministry given to the public is a reply by Mr. Duff Cooper in the House of Commons. He revealed that the staff of the Ministry of Information numbers 1,301. Since the Ministry was formed 1,078 of its staff have left it, 597 by resignation, 250 by dismissal, 178 by transfer, 46 by joining the Services, 7 by death. Does this mean that the Ministry has been staffed by an extraordinary set of incompetents? Or is there something about it which causes good people to leave or to be dismissed? I can only say that some very able and efficient people have been in and out of the Malet Street tower, and have left because there was no government policy to propagate, or because they were inhibited from spreading what there was of it.

* * *

I am glad to record the swift and masterly evacuation by the Food Ministry of their quite untenable egg-line. My note last week was barely in print when the Ministry announced not merely that registered commercial egg-producers will be permitted to retain eggs for their own household use, but that poultry-keepers may own up to 50 (instead of 12 hens) without coming into the "commercial" category. So most of the millions of fowls which would have been slaughtered under the original plan are reprieved. The Englishman's castle will still have a hen-run annexe. The Ministry is to be congratulated on a very sensible decision.

* * *

In his B.B.C. debate on the food situation with Ritchie Calder, Major Gwilym Lloyd-George appealed to us all not to try to obtain more than our fair share of unrationed foodstuffs. But what on earth is our fair share of unrationed goods? The half-bottle of mayonnaise may be the last in the village, in the county, in the whole country for all we know. What is our fair share of the current supply of eggs or gooseberries? There may be extreme physical and administrative difficulties in extending the scope of food rationing but the problem is not solved by fixing maximum prices, asking the public not to take more than an unknown quantity, and nagging it if it forms queues to discover the unknown quantity. The leading officials at the Ministry are quite aware of all this; they have a most difficult job. They should be pleased, not annoyed, when critics point out that cajolery and threats are inadequate substitutes for the ordinary price-mechanism. Their political chiefs must go much more to the root of things if they are to meet the complaints of ordinary people who judge not by announcements but by what is in the shop.

* * *

I am not surprised at the increasing and increasingly outspoken resentment, against ramping, racketeering and profiteering. A government department is evacuated to a seaside resort and landladies are required by government order to take in lodgers at a reasonable charge—£1 a week for bed, breakfast and supper. Well and good! But it turns out—so my friend who has just tried it assures me—that the bed is in a room with three others, that the breakfast and supper are so continuously inadequate that one goes continually hungry and that the landladies seek to recoup themselves by sixpenny baths, sixpenny cups of tea and sixpenny this, that and the other to such an extent that the billeting officer says—"it costs £1 a week, but if you want to make it tolerable you'll have to pay up to 30*s*.," and that if, in order to escape their rapacity you try to set up for yourself, you find that a furnished bed-sitter, without food, costs 25*s*. and an unfurnished room to yourself with supper and breakfast costs 30*s*.

* * *

A correspondent who I admit is a bit of a gourmet presents another side of the picture. He writes:

> Within the last week (that is, in the middle of the season) I have been charged 7*d*. in a London restaurant for a single stick of asparagus—to be quite fair, a bundle of four costs 2*s*. 3*d*.—equipped by a "posh" hotel in the Lake District with a sandwich containing solely the tail, part of one fin, and a segment of the vertebra of a sardine—it is one of the many disadvantages (to the eater, though not to the provider) of this so universally, though so unaccountably taken for granted, comestible that it enables the provider to secrete within the shelter of the bread walls food so meagre and repulsive that even by the English it would be rejected contumeliously if it came out into the open—and proffered as part of a railway company's train lunch, a wedge of pink gelatine. I am aware, of course, that the English jelly has the most insipid taste of any comestible save the English "shape," but this gelatine seemed to me to touch an apogee of tastelessness beyond any previous imagining. Interested, I rolled a fragment round my mouth seeking to discover the faintest hint of a *soupçon* or a nuance of a ghost of a flavour. In vain, for this curious substance, which only the culinary genius of the English could have conceived, plus two untasty sausages with attendant greens and potatoes plus soup, I was charged 3*s*.

* * *

A soldier who has followed the correspondence about Army Education in this paper writes to say that in his battalion "there are a number of strong Trade Unionists, who elected a committee to decide a list of subjects on which they would like to be enlightened." As he was on the staff of the Educational Officer, he saw these subjects crossed off the list, but "fifty men from each company were 'detailed' to attend a lecture given by some obscure professor of biology on the subject, 'The Sex Life of Bees.' The professor was indiscreet enough to draw allusion to the fact that there were a number of classes of bees, that the 'workers' slaved unceasingly and without reward for the benefit of the 'Queen' and the 'drones.' The following morning the Educational Officer showed me a letter from the C.O. which expressly laid it down that in future lectures no references either direct or indirect to class differences of society would be allowed."

* * *

Excepting an occasional routine item in its news bulletins, for a long, long time the B.B.C. had been sublimely unconscious of the existence of the Soviet Union. Then last Sunday things began to hum along the German-Russian frontier and, before anybody could mutter Frederick Ogilvie, Britain and the U.S.S.R. found themselves fighting the same enemy. Awkward, what? Obviously, thought some bright member of the B.B.C. staff, the B.B.C. ought to grant at least *de facto* recognition to the Kremlin, and so he telephoned the able London correspondent of *Tass*, Soviet official news agency; and asked him to broadcast. We do not know exactly why—could it have been to forestall the ugly suspicion that our great ethereal institution had fallen completely into the hands of extremists?—the B.B.C., however, invited the Russian journalist to broadcast during the children's hour. I suppose even Wall Street will admit that this doesn't exceed the bounds of good, clean fun.

* * *

Do we take the war seriously? The newspapers seem to differ about how many of us are serious. Anyway, a correspondent sends me the following three headlines about the numbers attending the Derby.

> 100,000 People at the Race.—*Daily Herald.*
> 50,000 Saw the Derby. *News Chronicle.*
> 25,000 See the Derby.—*Daily Telegraph and Morning Post.*

CRITIC

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

WHEN Russia by the Reich attacked
Concludes the Anglo-Soviet pact,
This suddenly accomplished fact
Disposes of the "isms";
The slogan and the shibboleth
So powerfully talked to death
Becoming just a waste of breath
And mere anachronisms.

Aggression by a single stroke
Collective action can provoke
(The snag on which Geneva broke,
For diplomats too tricky)
So capitalist circles here,
Forgetting their habitual fear,
Encourage with a Tory cheer
The battling Bolsheviki.

And as the *Internationale*
Keeps up the Carlton Club's morale,
While Soviets keeps up *Kapital*
Regardless of the label,
Both parties under arms dismiss
That ideologic prejudice
Which ought to be (but never is)
Discarded round a table.

This strange but logical event
Proves dead Geneva's argument
And makes its truth self-evident
To minds the most defective—
Faced with the common enemy
Extremes must as allies agree
For there is no security
Unless it is collective. SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to H. J. Laski.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

After all, Russia has not had a revolution for a long time and many Russians are beginning to feel it is high time she had one. Hitler has, therefore, put a German army at the disposal of his friend Stalin to frustrate any attempt on the part of would-be aggressors, like the Russian people or the Russian army, to wreck the peace which Hitler and Stalin are going to make.—*Time and Tide* (June 20th).

Youth for Bookmaker's office (Protestant).—*Wanted Advt.* in *Belfast Telegraph.*

Retired colonel requires capable general over 30.—*Advt.* in *The Friend.*

Lady whose "good companion" must be put to sleep offers real country home to young bitch.—Advt. in *Times.*

After talking to-day to Mr. Ronald Campbell about his journey from Belgrade I believe the statement that he brought his cricket bat with him.—*Yorkshire Observer.*

Harrogate Town Council to-day discussed how long after the war they should allow double-decker buses to run from Harrogate to Ripon.—*Yorkshire Post.*

THE SHORTAGE SCARE STUNT

MANY years ago I heard Mussolini make his first speech in Venice. Venice was then supposed to be "very independent," and there was a good deal of speculation about the reception which the Duce would get from it. Perhaps for this reason the staging of his speech was terrific. When, at nine in the evening, the great Piazza had been packed to suffocation, one pair of the closed shutters facing St. Mark's was flung open, and, as the figure of the Dictator stepped forward to the balcony against a background of glittering candelabra, scarlet flares flamed from the Campanile, white flares around the roofs rolled billows of smoke across the sky. Then the Voice spoke.

I was very curious about it all, and against my will, rather impressed. The Voice spoke well. The Voice said, very slowly, that it had No Use for Liberty, and that what it demanded was Discipline and Obedience. And Venice took it. As an Englishman I felt, then, rather contemptuous. Discipline and Obedience, indeed! No use for Liberty! Shades of Abraham Lincoln, or was it Magna Carta? Anyway, we had, and would keep, Liberty in England.

But since then, like lots of other folks, I have come to see what an awkward thing Liberty may be. We are supposed to be fighting for it, so I understand. But I can't help wishing that someone, if they can't define war aims, would at least define Liberty. Liberty to do what? To cheat the customer? To make a fortune out of munitions? To bamboozle people by clever advertisement into buying goods they don't want? To create scares?

Take the last. I am all for the Liberty of the Press—in theory. But, if I come to think it over, what do I mean by that? What do *you* mean by it? I think, if I'm quite frank, that I mean that the press shouldn't impose ideas which I don't agree with. Don't we all? Or at any rate, we believe that the forum of press opinion should at least *include* our ideas and beliefs. But let's go one step higher. Do many of us really believe that the press—however "popular" it may be—should feed the public with cheap sentimentality, murder, sensation, exaggeration? Having gone so far, I propose, if the editor permits (and I take my hat off to him if he does), to attack one seemingly trivial, possibly unimportant, perhaps non-political ramp—to wit, the Shortage Scare Stunt.

I have worked for some months in the Ministry of Food. During those months it seemed to me that a quite definite pattern emerged from all the "shortages," and that the Ministry frequently got kicks which it didn't deserve. And the pattern was always the same, whether it was onions or oranges or fish or marmalade. To my possibly disordered imagination it visualised itself like this:—

SCENE I. Major Marrow: "Onions (like diamonds) seem to be getting scarce. Let's buy them up."

SCENE II (a month later). Mr. Sprout: "I've got fifteen thousand tons, but nobody's buying."

Mr. Bargain Basement: "Let's make a shortage scare."

SCENE III. *Editor of the "Daily Stunt":* "Not much news. Headline the onions shortage."

SCENE IV. Everybody rushing to buy onions.

SCENE V. No onions.

SCENE VI. Ministry of Food blamed by *Daily Stunt.*

Perhaps this is only partially true. Perhaps I am seeing villains where there are only muddlers. Yet the pattern goes on. And it is enormously helped, even made—perhaps quite unconsciously—by the cheap press of this country, or, at any rate, by some sections of it. I am going to try to demonstrate this.

Soap! So far, there has been no shortage of soap. But on Sunday, June 8th, a newspaper scare began. I was particularly interested in this because, having never laid in a "stock" of soap and having run out of a particular soap that I like, I had made a round of the chemists on Saturday morning. It had taken me a good while to discover what I wanted, but in the round I was offered not only an enormous variety of soaps, but any amount of soap. So far as anyone who isn't a "mass observer," but only a moderately observant layman, could be certain of anything, I was certain that there was *not*, as yet, a "shortage of soap." But I now foresaw that there would be. So I did a little observing on my own. I visited chemists from Kensington to Holborn and asked for soap. (Please don't tell me that I should have gone to Silvertown; the point here is quite different.) I found, of course, that there was a "run" on soap, though it had only reached a restricted number of shops. In Piccadilly Circus it was rationed—"only two tablets; everyone is asking for it this morning, I don't know why." In Kensington, no: "Take as much as you like: there's never been any shortage, so far as we know." And so on. I gathered that one could, if one wanted to be a soap-hog, buy as much as one liked, particularly if one had the time and took the trouble to visit a good many shops and buy a little at each. But the "shortage scare" was working up. Two or three million people were tending to hoard soap. And why not? Don't get the thing mixed up; it's not just "the wealthy" (whoever they are now—demolition workers, I gather) who do it; it's the millions who read papers like the *Daily Stunt.* Nobody's told them *not* to hoard soap; the *Daily Stunt* has told them that they can't get it; they wouldn't be human if they didn't try. So there's a mad rush for soap. But the end of it all may be a soap famine, and soap rationing, while a few MILLION people hoard soap. And then the *Daily Stunt* will try a fresh racket about soap-hoarders. What infernal rubbish.

What's the upshot? Just this. Some of our newspapers are creating scares, and thereby creating scarcity, followed by envy and bad blood. And there are two ways of dealing with this. The Ministries of Supply, Trade, Food or Agriculture can perfectly well foresee shortages and can either ration or warn the public in time—and I for one simply decline to believe that the public won't co-operate if they are warned. A few hogs will not make any appreciable difference. But there is, to my mind anyway, all the difference in the world between being decently warned to go slow on something and being told, inaccurately, by some paper: "Look out! You'll get no more so-and-so if you don't hurry!" The case of tobacco is just another example. All that the Tobacco Controller has said sounds good sense to me, and is borne out by retailers; the only pity is that he *doesn't* say, very loudly: "Kindly cut down your smoking by 10 per cent., and don't hoard; if you do that we can all have enough; if not, I shall start rationing next week." Once again the mischief is that the *Daily Stunt* or *Morning Scream* yells "Cigarette famine!" and everyone who has never smoked thinks he will, or rushes to buy cigarettes for friends, everyone who smokes 10 cigarettes a week rushes to lay in 500, every normal smoker becomes a chimney, and the 90 per cent. of pre-war demand available—and surely plenty for everyone—is stretched to answer an idiotic demand for 130 per cent. No wonder that there is muddle and scarcity.

I have said that there are two ways of dealing with this business. One is for the Government to have more foresight. The other is for people—you and me, that is—to be less bamboozled by the more irresponsible part of the press. If there are real and cruel shortages, then it is the business of M.P.s to see that the Government takes action, and it is our business to worry M.P.s mad until they do their job, instead of asking a mass of fantastically stupid questions. The press, to some extent, has to make up for the shortcomings of

Parliament; but I think that, when the press is shouting for liberty, it will be very unwise to indulge in the type of Shortage Scare Stunt which is becoming common to-day. And you and I, if we are wise, will not only keep our demands on soap and tobacco down (cosmetics shortage, I see, is a fresh scare now), knowing that any "shortage" is merely an unjustified run on the banks, from which sensible people should refrain; we shall also, if we are wise, confine our attention to newspapers which do not, for sheer sensation's sake, produce Shortage Scares.

LIONEL FIELDEN

OVER THE WATER

TIME was, when British Jacobites used to toast "the King Over the Water." Times change; and now the British Commonwealth harbours four monarchs and seven Governments exiled from their countries. All over Europe nations think of their leaders, over the water, who form in Britain nuclei of resistance; and whose return will mean the restoration of freedom. These Governments meantime continue to bear their part in the war. They provide contact with their countries, where they conduct propaganda in consultation with Britain. They command forces of varyir g sizes, consisting of ships, of regular troops, and of men who have escaped as refugees. It is the enactments which are to empower the Czechoslovak Government to conscribe their own nationals and to try military offences in their own courts, which have produced letters both of defence and criticism in our columns. They throw light upon the complicated problems involved in organising a miniature State within a State.

The Czechoslovaks in Britain consist of two main layers. The foundation of the earlier arrivals were political refugees; Jews, Socialists, Communists, Sudeten anti-Nazis who started to trickle in after Munich. The Government of Benes and many of the soldiers left after the 1939 occupation of Prague; and from then till the outbreak of war they were collecting principally in France. The fall of France was followed by the imprisonment for some months of all refugees in Britain, and also by the transference of the Czech Government headquarters to this country. It was granted diplomatic immunity with the other Allied Governments, and is now, apart from conscription, training its army. That army consists of regular officers, of whom there is actually an over-supply; the Government has been forced to semi-retire a number and to make others serve as privates. The rank and file are mainly recruited from the refugees. Those who were released from concentration camp by joining the Pioneer Corps have been asked to volunteer for transfer. Those still under detention whose integrity is unquestionable, and those at liberty, are expected to join if they are fit. If they do not, the Czechoslovak Government has no power to force them. But it may refuse to recognise or protect them. In that case they could never return to their country and would be cast into the dreadful limbo of statelessness.

The criticisms of this form of conscription are in part political. The objectors say that the Czechoslovak Government was not constitutionally formed; that it is unrepresentative and irresponsible; that it contains Fascists, some of whom actually served under the Nazi occupation; that it contains no Communists and no Sudeten Germans.

These objections are of varying weight and varying accuracy. It is nearly impossible to elect a constitutional Government out of a fluctuating body of refugees in wartime; and the Governments of Britain and France were bound to stipulate for men whom they knew. In fact, the Czechoslovak Cabinet reflects the nationalism and also the democracy of the republic formed by Masaryk. Benes himself is an unrepentant democrat; in his record and his ability one of the small handful of leaders of Europe; any other chief of the Czechoslovak State would be unthinkable. The Prime Minister, M. Schramek, is a Catholic who formerly co-operated with the Socialists. There are a couple of generals, one Czech and one Slovak, of the Benes tradition; the Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk and Mr. Ripka are of the school of Masaryk; there are three Social-Democrats, Nemec, Becko and Necas; two representatives of finance and "big business," Osuski and Outrata. The latter, a banker, has devoted his whole fortune to the cause of Czech independence. Three Agrarians, Fierabend, Slavik, and Lichner, are of the Right; but Fierabend and Slavik opposed the Fascist Agrarians, and Fierabend, with the Social-Democrat, Necas, stayed in Czechoslovakia nominally serving the Nazis and actually doing counter-espionage after the occupation—a risky and honourable record and Lichner worked in Slovakia for the peasant credit organisations; he was an opponent of Tisa. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that the Czechoslovaks in exile would admit to their inner ring anybody who was not a Simon Pure patriot; and they have formed a coalition Government on wide lines, weighted in the centre. The exclusion of the Communists, who were anti-war (at any rate till Sunday, June 22nd) was inevitable. The absence of the Sudeten Social-Democrats is deplorable, for they have showed a double heroism, sacrificing both their homeland and their racial ties for the love of liberty.

The second class of criticisms are personal in various ways. How can men be asked to serve when their presence in the army will expose their families to death or imprisonment in Czechoslovakia? How can mature men, from professors to skilled workmen, be asked to take orders from regular officers with nothing but barrack-room experience? Why should not German Czechs and Jews be allowed to serve in the British army, instead of one in which they suffer bullying and discrimination on account of their race?

The answer of the Czech authorities to these complaints is that they and every man in the army have families in Czechoslovakia who are exposed to reprisals; and none of whom has asked (by the channels of communication which still exist) that they should not serve. The contingency is met, none the less; some soldiers use pseudonyms, and this is allowed. More, how can the Czechs in exile shelter behind British protection and take no risks when 100,000 Czechs are in German concentration camps, and the workers ask that the factories should be bombed by the British regardless of their own peril? The objectors to service are trying to create for themselves a private anarchy, safe, and immune from all authority. It is true that some racial friction in the army exists, and the Government is doing its best to cope with it, by insisting on tact and fairness.

There are some elements in this situation which affect the authorities and their critics alike. They inherit the long history of conflict and separation between races, tongues and creeds which makes the Central European patchwork; and whose solution still seems so far away. They were citizens of a new State, still in the making, where party creeds were passionately held, and created far sharper divisions than in the older democracies. They are, now, exiles; suffering from the shock of torn roots, from misery and suspicion in this country, with sensitive and exasperated nerves. They must feel that a new people is forming at home, that the race for whom they are fighting will be strange and perhaps ungrateful when they return. They are indeed working under acute difficulties, which demand from their leaders extreme justice, and from the people extreme tolerance.

BENEFITS OF SELF-DECEPTION

THE other night, being tired, I found myself in bed at a quarter past ten, and I said to myself: "It is only a quarter past eight, and I should not be here unless by playing tricks with the clock I had been able to deceive myself into thinking that it was two hours later." I have never gone to bed at a quarter past eight since I was a small child. I have seldom gone to bed even at a quarter past ten since I was a preparatory schoolboy. At an early age I acquired a fondness for late hours both at night and in the morning, and I came to hate bed before midnight and the waking world before the last minute at which it was necessary to rise in order to be at school not more than ten minutes late. If double Summer Time had been in existence, I should probably have gone to bed cheerfully at a few minutes past ten and have risen without protest between seven and eight, thus gaining health, wealth and wisdom, besides beauty sleep. Unfortunately, the Victorian clocks told the truth, and I had no means of deceiving myself into thinking that I had sat up till after midnight when I had sat up only till five minutes past ten. Hence I became a nightbird, wasting my eyes in reading by gaslight, squandering irrevocable opportunities of becoming wise and beautiful.

How lucky, in comparison, is the present younger generation! Being brought up in the Post-Willett Age, they are able to enjoy the pleasures of sitting up late while going to bed at an hour that we of the older world should have thought babyishly early. In Sir Max Beerbohm's story, *The Happy Hypocrite*, one of the proofs of the wickedness of Lord George Hell was that he used to sit up very late. The Lord George Hells of the Post-Willett Age will be able to earn a reputation for wickedness by staying up till, say, ten minutes past eleven. Similarly, the Falstaffs of the future, when they boast, "We have heard the chimes at midnight," will mean only that on one occasion they sat up till ten. Possibly, Mr. Willett, when he invented Summer Time, failed to realise that he was making things easy, not only for the virtuous, but for the vicious.

On the whole, however, I think the effects of Summer Time have been on the side of virtue. Never before have so many people gone willingly to work at so early an hour. Never before have so many

human beings gone to bed so early without a murmur. And all because Mr. Willett saw that what the world needed most, in order to learn to behave wisely, was a gigantic scheme of universal self-deception. If human beings were reasonable, he would have said quite simply: "Let us rise earlier and breakfast earlier, and go to work earlier during the summer months. Let the trains start an hour earlier, and judges turn up at the law courts an hour earlier. Let us rise with the lark as somebody or other is once supposed to have done. Let the eight o'clock factory open at seven and ten o'clock civil servants be at their desks at nine." Mr. Willett knew, however, that in this irrational world such a proposal would have met with angry opposition. It would have been a commonsense proposal, but it would have taken no account of human nature. All classes would have cried out against it. Elderly gentlemen of private means who had breakfasted at nine for years would have declared that they could not at their time of life begin breakfasting at eight without becoming physical wrecks. Judges would have retired *en masse* rather than begin the day's work before they were quite awake. Factory hands would have called on their unions to strike against this reversion to a morning slavery from which the last war had freed them. If the early-to-rise order had been put in force in what I consider a reasonable way, indeed, I am convinced that a large part of the population would have had to be dragged from their beds in the morning by the police and carried to their work, kicking and struggling, in Black Marias.

Mr. Willett, who understood human nature, foresaw this possibility. He knew that to be asked to rise an hour earlier than usual, especially if it were in order to work, would be to have a sense of grievance, and that men who obeyed such a request would feel not only resentful, but sleepy. Hence he had to ask himself how it was possible to persuade men to rise earlier and yet to remain cheerful and go briskly to their work. The solution of the difficulty probably came to him as suddenly as the falling apple brought the solution of a smaller problem to Isaac Newton. Learning that he had gone to bed at ten one night because the hands of the clock were pointing to midnight, and discovering next morning that they had pointed to midnight only because the clock had stopped earlier in the day, he may have said to himself: "That's a queer thing. If I had known it was only ten, I should not have been able to sleep. But, believing it was twelve, I fell asleep as soon as my head touched the pillow. Since human beings are the slaves of suggestions, and since the clock is one of the chief instruments of suggestion that govern our lives, why should we not make use of its powers for beneficent purposes? After all, it is twelve o'clock or any other hour of the day, if you think it so. Let us then alter our clocks so that eleven o'clock is made to appear as twelve, and you will do more to persuade people to keep virtuous hours than all the exhortations of the moralists. It may be that this would be teaching the clock to lie, but, as clocks have no souls, this would not matter. And was there ever a lie better justified? It may seem lamentable that we should first make the clock lie and that then, looking at the clock, we should lie to ourselves, but there must be a sound ethical defence for a lie that produced a nation of early risers." In this way, or something like it, I imagine, originated Summer Time, the greatest masterpiece of fiction of our century. Oscar Wilde, if he were living, would have rejoiced at such evidence of the revival of the art of lying. During Summer Time we all lie to each other and lie to ourselves, and, contrary to what Marcus Aurelius would have foretold, most of us feel very much the better for it.

The success of the policy of self-deception in regard to Summer Time makes me wonder whether the world was not a little hasty in dismissing as nonsense M. Coué's advocacy of self-deception—or auto-suggestion, as he called it—as a means of curing our physical ailments. Those who take a pedantic attitude to truth maintained that for an invalid to keep saying that he was getting better and better was in many cases lying on a large scale, and that no good could come of it. This seems to me to be nonsense. Doctors throughout the ages have often helped to cure their patients by lying to them, and by enabling them to deceive themselves by drinking things out of bottles. There is something to be said for the theory that in many cases a man is as well as he thinks he is; and if you say to a friend who is ill, "You are looking better," even though he is looking worse, it is more likely than not that he will begin to feel better. If we can help our friends to health in this way, why not also ourselves? There can be no great vice in standing before the mirror in the morning and saying to one's reflection: "You *are* looking fit. That drawn look has gone from your face, and the liverish colour has disappeared from your eyes as if by a miracle. The fact is, you're looking ten times younger than a year ago. I haven't seen you looking so well since the holiday we had together at Oban before the war." It seems to me that, if everybody began the day in this fashion, we should before long see the English turned into a nation of Mark Tapleys. After all, one of the handsomest clergymen I have ever known was a man who, thinking he was alone, was caught looking into a mirror and saying to himself: "You're a damned handsome man, T——, the handsomest parson in the diocese." If a man can make himself beautiful in this fashion by auto-suggestion, is it not reasonable to believe that he might also make himself healthy by the same means?

The Socratic "Know yourself" may possibly be quoted in opposition to this view. But true self-knowledge, I take it, is knowledge, not only of what one is, but of what one may be; and what one may be is often the more important of the two. The man who, when he rises in the morning, says: "I feel like a bear with a sore head," reveals knowledge only of a part of his being. In his preoccupation with the actual he misses the potential: he is like a man who believes that an iceberg consists merely of the part that is visible above the surface of the water. How much wiser he would be, and how much nearer true self-knowledge, if he said boldly and brazenly, whatever the aches in his skull: "I feel as fit as a fiddle." Not only would he begin to feel better at once, but he would show a philosophic understanding of the vast hidden reserves of that iceberg which is the human personality. Many people would, no doubt, call his statement an example of self-deception; but may there not be occasions on which self-deception is a stage on the road that leads not only to the true, the beautiful and the good, but to health?

The truth is, wishful thinking—or self-deception—may be the ally of good as well as of evil. As a result of it, I breakfasted at half-past seven (honest time) the other morning, and was as cheerful as if it had been—what the clock said—half-past nine.

Y. Y.

WHICH MUSIC?

(*To Mademoiselle Nadia Boulanger*)

WHOSE is the music of the Apocalypse?
To which do we meet the old Friend face to face?
To which do we find again those narrow lips
Curving that negative smile, in whatever place—
The Friend of twenty-five years ago, immutable,
Faithful to all and none, grey and inscrutable?

Not, please, the morning gusto of military marches;
Not, please! the sentimental briskness of bugles,
(That we thought we had buried in the former waves of Flanders
Mud, the brown-grey ocean with hands protruding).
Not, above all, Wagner, music from the navel,
(Even if another race had domed that forehead),
In spite of the Rhine's green majesty chilling through it,
In spite of the moonlight's foam and the two bodies
Tangled in Love's rough net, in spite of the Dutchman's
Blenched and unforgettable brow at the masthead;
For Thor's wearisome hammer is always conducting,
Even through Nuremberg's archest innocence, even
When the eternally profiled swan creaks homeward!

Not, somehow, Sibelius, no, though we render
Thanks for the chain of lakes' profound melancholia,
Thanks for that welcome and staccato gruffness,
And the high cheekbone against the ink of pines.

A surge, then, of revolution along the keyboard?
Sharp cries running from off those bloodless fingers,
(No starlight now, no Mediterranean!)
As the pale-haired Pole withdraws from the frightened window,
Transcribing the boulevard into a red thunder?
Or shall we—ah, more difficult!—call the Hero,
The real Siegfried, though closeted in with silence,
Silence, neglect, and envy, turning, turning
Round in the Viennese attic like rats on treadmills?
Shall we go find him under the oaks at Schönbrunn,
And hear the Austrian sky break into grandeurs,
White sublimities born of anguish, rolling
Their vasty joy's transcendence up to the doorway
Of peace where even the stoniest God must hear them,
Or if not He, the angels?

As for songs—but where are the mouths to sing them?
Closed, or dry with the dust of every heartbeat.

No, I think we must have other music, sounds that have passed
somewhere through a long line of crucibles,
Passed through the cinders of dreadful private things bitterer to
ourselves and dearer,
Something that daily, like the evening primrose, wells into a sigh
prodigious and bleeding,
Something that hardens while complaining, interprets the doubter
in the breastplate, the bedaggered fearer.

Let them call for us, fetch from the mines of waiting the music
of Tschaikowsky, of Peter Tschaikowsky;
Music that went out in Italian slippers and came back weeping
across the snow in boots;
That wanders from limelight to blacknesses unavowable, gathering
pearls threaded on nightshade,
That toys with splendour, and then suddenly tears the heart up
and out by its precious roots.

And the dancers float by on their slender calves of iron, and as
they vanish
In one steep spring, their faces throw a look where trembles an
agony all our own,
As if they knew that wood, strings, and metal must leave
mazurka to agility and valse to nostalgia,
Must turn to their destiny, and sweep our misery and courage
into one divine, one intolerable groan.

There only, out of the steppe, but through colonnades of gold,
runs the strange Boreas of comfort;
There only does Hope meet the rags of Despair with roses and
a handshake icy and warm;
Nowhere as in these purple sighs, this magnificence of pity, this
wild honey of desolation,
Shall we find the velvet of our pain, the gauze of our tears wedded
in such necromancy to the wire of Form. DERWENT

THE SACRED SQUARE MILE

THE art critic, dodging in and out of his little West End galleries in the good old pre-war days, often felt that there was something vaguely wrong in a system that was so delightfully convenient. Draw a line from St. James's Square to the north end of Bond Street, shade in an area a couple of hundred yards wide on either side of it and you had a square mile within which (apart from the big museums) 60 per cent. of the art worth seeing in these islands could be seen and 90 per cent. of the money spent on works of art changed hands. It was a universe smaller than a village. It was too easy. The critic dived into it, popped his head down like a duck looking for worms at the bottom of a pond, came up to the surface again and converted his worms into phrases.

But occasionally, in an introspective interval, he asked himself what exactly he was doing. Was he interpreting a needy painter to a puzzled public? It was nice to think so. But why did artists nowadays need such a devil of a lot of interpreting? The public in the middle ages wasn't puzzled. It didn't have to have critics turning the west fronts of St. Trophime or Chartres into a set of pretty phrases. Or was he just a publicity man boosting Art with a big A? If so, why wasn't he paid by the dealers instead of by his editor? And also, if so, why bother so much about the prettiness of the phrases? "Picasso: at Winkelheim's; vintage 1938, very advanced. Dame Nora White: at Spicer's; good academic stuff, plenty of gusto. Arthur Black: the Snob gallery; Society portraiture, no aesthetic merit, but you'll see some nice people at the private view. Peter Brown: no reputation yet, but buy him while he's cheap. Mark my words, he'll have a vogue in less than ten years." Surely that was all that was needed?

Meanwhile, outside the sacred square mile nobody bothered much. The rich or the interested could visit the West End if they could find the time. But most of the interested couldn't find the time. The galleries were closed on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, and it wasn't easy, even if you were in London, to snatch an hour at lunch time or between five and six in the afternoon. And if you were not in London it was impossible. So the art-hungry provincial visited his local art gallery and either liked or detested it according to whether his taste was satisfied by small water colours of Tintern Abbey and large oils of the Death of Cleopatra interspersed with cases of beetles and fragments of Roman pottery.

The reader will doubtless have observed the nostalgic past tense that runs through the above reflections. The spirit that created the sacred square mile still lingers on, but the conditions under which it flourished no longer exist. The West End—let's face it—is no longer a fit place for the accumulation of valuables. No one can afford to hang two thousand pounds' worth of fragile merchandise on his walls while there is a good chance of finding it turned to dust if not ashes next morning. Many of the London dealers (about a third of them) are still carrying on. They are even selling pictures—cheaper pictures than they sold before the war, and to younger, poorer people. But the square mile is no longer sacred. The deep-piled carpets in the more opulent galleries are showing signs of wear and the elegant young men who used to point out the quality of paint and draw one's attention to the superb orchestration of colour are busy elsewhere, many of them on another kind of camouflage.

Moreover, there is no longer that delightful northerly flow of Impressionists and Post-Impressionists and Old Masters across the Channel from France and Holland. Dealers must now subsist on home-grown produce, and as everybody knows, British painters don't fetch a quarter the price of French ones nor a tenth the price of Old Masters. So what with money being scarcer, and the population being more scattered, and Londoners being less mobile, and the risk of destruction being considerable, and the available masterpieces fewer and the difficulty of selling to America enormous, the economic stability of Bond Street is not what it was.

But, after all, economics are not as important as all that. The dealer may be having a thin time, but what matters is that the artist should go on producing art and that the public should go on consuming it. The dealer can surely leave his square mile and sell his goods like any other commercial traveller. Or he can disappear altogether and leave the artist to sell his own goods. Someone, it is certain, must look after the salesmanship. People don't want art till they see it. In the world of necessities the demand creates the supply: in the cultural world the process is reversed. A hungry man will shout for bread till he gets it. But he only begins to cry for beauty when he has got it—or some of it. His aesthetic appetites grow only with eating.

Broadly speaking, the supply of visual art outside London has hitherto been grossly inadequate both in quantity and in quality—especially in quality. In consequence the cultural gap between London and the smaller provincial towns is far greater in the visual than in any of the other arts. Music travels as easily from Broadcasting House to Puddlewick-on-Ouse as it does to Putney. Puddlewick's library is liable to contain at least a hundred literary masterpieces. Puddlewickians even find it possible to see a fairly good play from time to time. But they can't see decent contemporary paintings without taking an almost impossible amount of trouble. And as a result, when they do see them they are surprised and shocked. "Heaven preserve us," they say, "Is this modern art? Give us Landseer and Frith."

The cure? To begin with, travelling exhibitions of good contemporary work. Such travelling exhibitions do exist and are becoming more numerous, but there is need for far more of them. The British Institute of Adult Education, the Contemporary Art Society, the Art Exhibitions Bureau and the Artists' International Association are working hard. But all these efforts still radiate from London. Aesthetically speaking, the provinces are still living on charity. They haven't yet begun to learn that they must provide their own fun instead of having it unloaded on them from a London van. Recently there has been one little instance of a new process at work. The exhibition lately held at the Ashmolean Museum of paintings by artists working in or near Oxford was an index that London need not be the only source of supply. But even at Oxford the Contemporary Art Society had a finger in the pie.

The population of Great Britain is now far more evenly spread than it was two years ago. The people who paint pictures and the people who want them are now in Cornwall or Malvern or Bath. The chance of the provinces has come. The machinery for exploiting that chance does exist—tenuous machinery perhaps, but it can be made to work. Or a lively group of artists here, an enthusiastic curator there, or a dealer who has forsaken London, can easily create the machinery where it doesn't already exist.

There is no difficulty in attracting provincial attention. Whisper the word "modern" and the Blimps will flock to an exhibition to scoff in even larger numbers than the anti-Blimps who go to pray or the non-Blimps who go with an open mind. I have myself, on one occasion, collected together a set of contemporary paintings for exhibition in smallish towns. In London they would have caused no comment. Outside London they produced a *succès de scandale* which with a little patience and diplomacy could be turned into a *succès d'estime*. ERIC NEWTON

THE MOVIES

"I Wanted Wings" at the Plaza and the Carlton.
"Crisis in the Atlantic"
"Come Live With Me," at the Empire.

Sometimes the Hollywood superlative comes off. *I Wanted Wings* is the longest, loudest, most hair-raising and eye-compelling of air films yet. It really does break new ground in this type of film and puts an end, I think, to Mr. Robert Taylor in pilot's dress romping home on the level of the *Magnet* serial. The co-operation of the U.S.A. air arm has meant, for once, a great deal more than a few shots of hangars and planes patterning the clouds. On the documentary side, there is enough material about the training of pilots to fill several issues of *The March of Time:* a mock air raid over Los Angeles (rather stagey, as no doubt these manoeuvres are in fact), the control-room with its table-map and croupiers and gallery, plump little fighters peeling off in formation or dragging round after a short landing, huge silver bombers dropping parachute flares, air observers in shacks, wireless operators everywhere, crash landings, hedge-hopping, slow rolls, solo flights, and the long, long routine before any of these excitements become part of the cadet's life. All this is realistic as well as spectacular; and best of all the men who share in it are made human and credible. There are no Hell-Cats, no blundering heroes from Pensicola. The prep. school atmosphere fades early in the film, with a new batch of cadets arriving, and we see them growing up as well learning their job. At first sight the three room-mates in the foreground are a Robert Taylorish rich sportsman (Ray Millaud), a disarmingly clumsy football player (William Holden) and a nervy garage mechanic (Wayne Morris). There is some subtlety as well as fun in the way they develop. The mechanic, after initial funk, turns out the most brilliant pilot; the rich sportsman shows alternate streaks of weakness and heroism; the footballer, making every possible blunder, ends by taking as naturally to the air as a porpoise to the waves. All that part and development of the film is extremely good; vivid, new and convincing. But further incident is added by love tangles. A cabaret siren (Veronica Lake) and a press photographer (Constance Moore) play havoc with our trio of cadets to the extent of a bad crash, one dismissal from the service and a stern warning. It is a pity that a film which aims, for the most part successfully, at out-stripping earlier efforts should have let itself go with "drama" too. The half-hour-too-long of *I Wanted Wings* could have been remedied with fewer of the fatal appearances of the cabaret girl; she murders someone, stows away in a bomber and dies in the final crash. A new star had, apparently, to be made by this film —Veronica Lake, the "new blonde bomber"— and that takes us away from criticism into the field of Hollywood economics.

The seventh year of *The March of Time* begins with one of their best achievements. No blonde bombers lighten the twenty minutes of *Crisis in the Atlantic*, 1941, but it is a dramatic film that takes us from water level to the target-view of the sea from a diving Stuka, from Canadian docks to Nazi "tourists" in Greenland and mine-sweepers clearing a path for the convoy. Every second tells in the packed, pictorial treatment of a subject. I advise those who still believe that our own film propaganda is adequate to see this brilliant example of what Americans are doing on our behalf.

Once more in *Come Live With Me* James Stewart is a writer, unsuccessful, hard up, in an emotional mess. The best parts of the film are in the early tableaux of impoverishment, when sarcasm and the Stewart display of hands create almost a convention of their own. Hedy Lemarr, as the refugee who marries him for a passport, is charming in a rather negative way. It's agreeable and prettily done; but I feel that the time has come for Mr. Stewart to extract something more from his impersonations of writers than light romance.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Cambridge Theatre Concerts

The fourth of the Cambridge Theatre Concerts was a brilliant affair. It is rarely in wartime London that one finds a concert good to look at on paper and sounding as good as it looks. That really was the case on Sunday. Louis Kentner gave a performance of Beethoven's third piano concerto which, if quality could attract by magic, would have drawn out of the heat haze all the musically minded in London. There are other ways of playing Beethoven than Kentner's, more stressed, more broken, and merely louder; but so long as we are listening to this pianist, we accept his way. He has an infallible sense of rhythm (by no means universal among concerto pianists); his resumptions would inspire any group of performers to play well; he is above the orchestra but never outside it. Few of the great exponents of Beethoven can have been less personally assertive. Does this music need a touch of violence lacking in Kentner? It is arguable. We have had more massive trills, growing one out of the other, but then, how often too, the discords of the finale have clattered instead of sailing towards an end! The other especial pleasure on Sunday evening was a performance of Wolf's Italian Serenade (Roger version), in which an individualised orchestra did well with that rich and rare music.

Sadler's Wells Opera at the New Theatre

A fortnight's season opened last Monday with *La Traviata*, and the audience showed their appetite for music by a remarkable enthusiasm. The critic had to decide between applauding the gallantry of the enterprise and deploring the inadequacy of the results, for the performance may have been *magnifique*, but it was not opera. The resources available to the Sadler's Wells company are, of course, very small, and we cannot expect an opera comparable with that of Berlin until some public subvention is procured. When Miss Joan Cross sings, one is ready to overlook deficiencies in others for the pleasure of listening to her. Unluckily on the opening night she was not performing. Doubtless there are many lovers of music who consider that any opera is better than none, but is there any good reason why Sadler's Wells should not manage their opera as skilfully as they do their ballet?

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, June 28th—
Sokol Gymnastic Festival in aid of Czecho-slovak Red Cross Society, Stoll Theatre, Kingsway, 2.30.
Gramophone Concert in aid of Morley College Rebuilding Fund, Holst Room, Morley College, 2.30 and 7.

SUNDAY, June 29th—
Lord Snell: "A Sane Cure for the Ills of a Mad World," Conway Hall, 11.
K. B. Smellie: "The Future of the State," 17 Manchester Street, W.1, 11.

MONDAY, June 30th—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, P. Gordon Walker: "The Development of Labour Party Foreign Policy," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.
Fabian Society Inaugural Meeting, John Parker: "Wartime Controls in Industry," Friends House, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, 7.30.

WEDNESDAY, July 2nd—
Dr. Josef Kodicek: "The Life and Works of Capek," 18 Grosvenor Place, W.1, 6.
F. D. Klingender: "Goya in the Democratic Tradition," 9 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 7.
E. F. M. Durbin: "Economic Planning Without Totalitarianism," Conway Hall, 7.

THURSDAY, July 3rd—
Recital of Modern French and Spanish Piano Music, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.30.

FRIDAY, July 4th—
W. N. Warbey: "Russia—an Objective Analysis," Friends House, 7.30. Adm. 1s.

Correspondence

THE INDIAN QUESTION

SIR,—Sir John Maynard's article on the Indian question is both sympathetic and constructive, but will be no solution of it even as a wartime emergency, the reason being that Sir John has taken a clean slate to write on, whereas the Indian question had after 25 years of leisurely consideration reached a final decision in the ninth resolution of the Imperial War Conference passed on April 16th, 1917. May I point out the glaring defects that underlie Sir John's solution?

In the first place he suggests the appointment of a distinguished Indian public man as the Secretary of State for India. Such a man would not be able to retain his office for many days, as being a member of the British Cabinet, it will be his duty to carry out the policy of that Cabinet regarding India, and there are numerous questions that await solution upon which the British Cabinet's policy would probably be in conflict with that acceptable to India. Take the case of the Indian currency. India has never become reconciled to the linking of our currency with the pound and fixing its rate of exchange by statute, with the result that India has been a heavy loser in her world trade.

Now suppose the Secretary of State were to respond to the voice of India and sever that link, the British Cabinet would almost unanimously out-vote him. What is he then to do but resign? And there are several such questions, one such being the export of Indian gold, and the question of fiscal autonomy upon which the interests of India and of England are not identical.

I have given only a few out of the many questions that await solution, the solution of which is not possible without Indian autonomy. That is the one reason why India has been for so long fighting for it, and I still hope, that in the larger interest of Great Britain and the solidarity of the British Commonwealth, the present British Cabinet will have the political foresight and imagination to reaffirm the decision of the Coalition Government of 1917, when England was placed in the same strait in which she finds herself to-day.

A few days ago Sir Dennis Bray, a retired Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, delivered a radio address in which he referred to the question everywhere asked in America that if England is fighting for freedom, how is it that she denies freedom to India? England has no answer to give except the age-old shibboleths about communal tension and the rest. But these are well-worn excuses, and those who have studied the constitutional history of Canada and South Africa, will find that the communal conflict between the British and the Boers in the one case and between the British and the French in the other, were made an excuse for perpetuating Imperialism till better sense prevailed.

India is the only country in whose case that settlement has neither been redeemed nor repudiated. On the other hand, on October 24th, 1933, while both Sir Austen Chamberlain and myself were sitting round a table to report on the Government proposal for further advance, I questioned Sir Austen why the pledge he had given as Secretary of State for India had not been carried out and he admitted that the pledge given by him was genuine and intended to be promptly made good, and when I drew Mr. Winston Churchill's attention to this long-standing commitment of his Government, he had the candour to promise me his co-operation. But in spite of these assurances, the reactionary Act of 1935 was placed on the Statute Book, and we are now in the midst of another Great War, in which

India is anxious to do her bit but finds herself divided because of this broken promise and nothing in substitution therefor, except a tame offer of multiplying the irresponsible executive of the Viceroy's Executive Council, as if two wrongs would make one right.

It seems to me that no solution, however attractive and plausible, will now receive the general assent of politically minded India, except the solution already reached, and any delay in its fulfilment only leads to waste of time and the further worsening of the situation, already bad enough in all conscience.

8 Royal Avenue, Chelsea, S.W.3. HARI SINGH GOUR

THE VANISHING TRICK

SIR,—I notice that Ritchie Calder in his article "The Home Front" says that "while seasonal goods are in supply, consumption of canned goods is eating up reserves."

Seasonal goods, however, are *not* in supply. As each successive seasonal fruit comes on the market, it promptly disappears when the controlled price is brought into force. Gooseberries, for instance, were to be bought at the usual fabulous early season prices until the price was controlled, since when I doubt if ordinary working people have seen a gooseberry, except on a bush. I have heard from two separate sources that gooseberries are there to be picked, but that pickers cannot be paid at the price, i.e. somebody is not getting sufficient profit.

Tomatoes were controlled from Monday, which meant that, instead of the excellent ripe tomatoes obtainable in all shops up to last Saturday at over 2s. a pound, the tomatoes openly on sale the next two days were only half-ripe and would never have been put up for sale in the ordinary way at this time of the year. In three so-called "high-class" shops, where tomato sales were "hanging fire" last week owing to the high price, I noticed that there were no tomatoes on show in the windows at all. Obviously a good grade of tomato was hiding behind the counter.

These examples (preceded by the famous one of the onions) are obviously only the forerunners of similar conjuring tricks in the fruit line during the rest of the summer. The state of the market is admittedly influenced this year by the fruit crop having been damaged by the late frosts, but until something is done to ensure equal distribution to the consumer at the same time as price control is established, the working-class people cannot be blamed for opening a tin of fruit in the height of a fresh fruit season with no fresh fruit obtainable, and at a time of year when fruit is the food for which we all crave.

136 Wellington Street, Slough. ELIZABETH REED

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

SIR,—The Labour Party's attitude to Family Allowances seems to be based on some very cock-eyed economic thinking. Apparently it is believed that the more independent sources of income the worker has the more he is at the mercy of the employer. I should have thought it was the other way about. Can you, sir, beat down Bernard Shaw on the fee for an article because you know he already has a substantial fortune? If the Duke of Westminster runs a herd of dairy cows, does the wholesaler get the milk for nothing because the Duke can live on his rents? Does a stenographer with naturally curly hair get less wages because the employer knows she can economise on permanent waves? This line of reasoning shows a complete ignorance of the forces determining market prices, the same ignorance which believes that "profiteering middlemen" determine the price of onions and gooseberries. If my newspaper vendor comes into the Old Age Pension, is he forced to reduce the price of his papers to three-farthings? Will the workers be in a weaker position after the war because they have blocked income-tax payments to their credit? If so, will the State do them a good turn by repudiating the obligation? If a worker knows that whatever happens there is 15s. a week to feed his three children, does this weaken his determination or power to strike? The arguments of some of the T.U. leaders seem to me quite fantastic.

London, N.2. G. L. SCHWARTZ

UNDER WHAT FLAG?

SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION printed on May 31st, 1941, a letter under the heading "Under What Flag?" signed anonymously by "Two Czech Democrats in Khaki."

The letter contained, among others, this statement: ". . . Czech Courts are working to capacity in secret sessions . . . and to tell the truth, the majority of 'criminals' are being recruited from among the 'unreliable elements' such as Jews in particular and nationals of the Minorities in general. . . ." As General Prosecutor of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces I beg to state that neither of these statements is true. The sessions of Czechoslovak Courts Martial are always public and open to all civilians of whatever nationality, except of course in cases where the Law provides for secret sessions. Up to now, however, the public has not been excluded from any session at all. The Courts consist of independent judges, according to Czechoslovak, i.e. democratic laws. Nor is it correct that the majority of the "criminals" is of Jewish faith or belongs to some national minority. This would indeed be a very bad testimony for them. In reality everybody who breaks the law has to come before the Courts, regardless of religion or nationality. It is my duty to state this in defence of Czechoslovak subjects of Jewish faith or belonging to the national minorities, as such allegations are an insult to their bona-fides. It is not correct that the majority of the persons found guilty are of Jewish faith or belonging to the national minorities. On the contrary, the number of such persons is smaller than the number that would correspond to the percentage of Jews and members of the Minorities in the Czechoslovak Armed Forces.

134 Piccadilly, London, W.1. GENERAL PROSECUTOR FOR THE CZECH ARMED FORCES

SIR,—You have published in your STATESMAN AND NATION four letters concerning Czechoslovak matters. No doubt you are pursuing the real and holy task of the press, i.e. to improve where improvement cannot be obtained by the responsible organs. I am further convinced that the writers of the preceding four letters do not pursue impure aims. But in spite of it their reports are not quite correct.

I am an old soldier and now I have been for twenty months in the Czech Army. I know the soul of the Czech soldier. Our Army is not an Army of reactionary elements. There is no intolerance against religious or national minorities. The Czech soldier has joined this Army only because he wants to fight the greatest enemy of human civilisation. He is fanatically democratic and social with all consequences of this elementary conviction.

But there is another unhappy fact. In the guidance of the Army is a dozen or two of higher officers who do not represent the character of the Czech soldiers or mentality of our unhappy people. These are men without education, without sense for the soul of the soldier, without the necessary imagination. They have only one aim: their own interest, their military career. They are blind and they are not able to forget the peaceful barrack-yard; they do not even know that this war is a revolution preparing a new life in a new Europe. These men do not only poison the soul of the soldier but they also trouble the life of the younger officers who suffer under this régime as hard as the soldiers do.

The problem of the Czechoslovak Army is not a problem. The Czechoslovak Army before the war was the best Army in the whole world. We have not changed. But it is necessary to remove as soon as possible these undesirable elements and to send them where they belong.

The question Under What Flag? has only one possible answer: the flag hoisted by the great man Masaryk, the flag which now bears his legitimated follower Benes. This is the flag of democracy, social equality, progress and honesty.

I am unhappy that I am obliged to sign this letter as an anonymous. But the name is not deciding.

AN UNKNOWN CZECH SOLDIER

[This subject is discussed this week in our article "Over the Water."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

REFUGEE ORGANISATIONS

SIR,—May I add a few final words to the controversy about refugee organisations? The anonymous letter-writer who criticised (in your issue of June 21st) my views on this subject, although not willing to deal with my statements of fact, seems to me to lack political experience; for he thinks that the "question is not whether there are Communists among the members of those organisations, but whether the organisations themselves are Communist." I just refer to the reply given by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons on June 19th, and to his remark about the well-known Communist method of "infiltration."

The anonymous "Refugee" stated that "all of us who have been interned remember gratefully the letters and parcels which were sent from these organisations." But I happen to know quite a number of ex-internees, incidentally non-Communist refugees, who did not receive any parcels from those organisations. As for the gratitude of all the others, may I quote the "Onchan Pioneer" (No. 39), the paper of the refugees at Onchan Camp, I.O.M.? "Liebesgaben parcels, a few shillings pocket-money and a few meaningless phrases will no longer suffice to prevent people from thinking all this over and to reach the ultimate consequences." It is also not correct to suggest that other bodies than the "Centres" and "Leagues" which the T.U.C. does not want to support, have not assisted internees and "avoided painfully to mention the internment problem." There is ample proof for the opposite.

London, W.C.1. GERHARD GLEISSBERG

COLOUR BAR

SIR,—In your review of "The Colour Bar" in last week's issue, it is stated that Dr. Leys, the author, holds that the African does not differ from us in his "inherent capacities"; and that his admitted present "backwardness" is due to "our wickedness in the past."

These beliefs are very sweeping and of fundamental importance. I confess I do not know how Dr. Leys arrives at them, but I should like to ask your readers, if I may, to consider what use the African made of his capacities before he became the subject of our wickedness.

Did he develop the great country which he inhabits? Did he move from one stage to another in human progress during the ages? Or in any department of human life and knowledge?

All this before our wickedness came into play.

If specific examples are desired, I suggest such matters as—little or no art of recording speech or thought; of permanent buildings; of travel; of harnessing nature to man's advantage or protecting him against the assaults of nature; of combination for greater strength.

Third Avenue, Hove. UNCONVINCED

OBSOLETE WORDS

SIR,—Temerarious though it may be to question Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith's scholarship and Mr. Dodington's judicial infallibility as the setter of your last competition, I nevertheless venture to point out that neither has consulted the O.E.D. to much purpose, else Mr. Smith would have been disqualified for including in his list of obsolete words one which is still alive and in no danger of dying. The word, Literate, is defined in the O.E.D. as, "in the Church of England, one who is admitted to holy orders without having obtained a university degree." In modern Anglican usage the term is employed in a still more restricted sense to cover those who have undergone no course of professional training for the Anglican ministry. Non-graduates who have studied at a theological college are no longer so termed. This usage is to be found in the ordination lists of the English dioceses, which are published in the *Times*. It must, however, be conceded that in such cases there is seldom any sharp distinction between literates and illiterates.

389 Walmley Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham. P. R. SMYTHE

SIR,—"Tahnit" on page 638, quotes "Nesh" as an obsolete word worthy of revival. In Cheshire (and elsewhere I dare say) it is far from obsolete and is in common use by country folk of no literary pretensions. When I was a boy and complained of feeling cold my father used to say, "Don't be nesh." Its meaning in these parts is "unduly sensitive physically; lacking in grit." R. CECIL OWEN

MRS. GASKELL

SIR,—Mr. Pritchett, in your issue of June 21st, says that this book is dead; it is certainly not dead in the sense of being out of print, as it has been continuously on sale in *The World's Classics* since 1908 and still sells some hundreds of copies a year.

Oxford University Press. H. S. MILFORD

[Another correspondent writes to say that Mrs. Gaskell was not of "Low-Church" outlook, but the daughter of a well-known Unitarian Minister. —ED., *N.S. & N.*]

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

My friend, Mr. Cyril Connolly, in the June *Horizon*, decides that Proust, whom he has been re-reading, is a hoax. He complains that Proust was an invalid, lacking the sense of proportion without which no masterpiece can be achieved. But the exquisite shapeliness that he requires is absent from many of the supreme masterpieces: this is all a matter of temperament, no doubt, but I admire Shakespeare more than Racine, and Balzac more than Flaubert, just as I admire Proust more than Anatole France. Mr. Connolly admits, however, that war may distort literary judgment. For my part I do not now find my pleasure in Proust diminished; I have continued during the war my habit of reading him, and now for the first time have tried the admirable English translation, which has just been issued in a uniform and convenient edition. (*Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Stephen Hudson. Chatto and Windus. 12 vols. 5s. each.)

That Proust's work is uneven I agree, and owing to it being all one book one cannot so easily neglect the weaker parts as one can neglect the less successful novels of Balzac or Henry James. Mr. Connolly says the book is half a million words too long—its length, I believe, is about a million and a half; I should say about a hundred thousand could advantageously be pruned. But I can hardly understand how anyone who has acquired a taste for Proust could lose it. For Proust, like Boswell and Miss Austen, makes us intimate with a number of fascinating characters, who come to interest us no less than our friends in the flesh. I continue to enjoy meeting Saint-Loup and the Duc de Guermantes very much as I enjoy meeting, or hearing gossip about, Mr. Connolly. No novelist has made his characters more real to us than Proust, and we are told much more about them than about any other figures in fiction. For this reason alone I believe him to be incomparably the greatest writer who has flourished in my lifetime. Moreover, their relations with one another are so handled as to form an unparalleled study of social life. Much that is irrelevant has been written about Proust's snobbery; for whatever his personal conduct, the one fault of his picture of the Faubourg is over-harshness. Many persons may be vexed by the punctilio with which nuances of social status are studied and explained. But such nuances are facts, even if they are unpleasant facts, and realism is not a method applicable only to the petty burgess and the workman. In my opinion realism has never been more profitably used than in Proust's delineation of an aristocracy that has neither political power nor an educated taste.

His other gifts, if secondary, are hardly less remarkable. There is in him a great impressionist, whose rendering, not only of things seen but of things heard and things felt, is aesthetically as lovely and significant as the works of Renoir and Debussy. There is in him a great discoverer of truths, whose patient pursuit of the general laws governing human behaviour and sentiment place him with La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère. Here I must mention far the most important critical work that has yet appeared on Proust, now unluckily out of print—I refer to M. Albert Feuillerat's *Comment Marcel Proust a composé ses romans* (Yale University Press). This shows how, during the seventeen years he spent upon his novel, Proust altered his attitude and method. The first draft of the novel was a shimmering transcription of memories effected in a pictorial and melodious style. Then he began interpolating sentences, paragraphs, scenes, whole long chapters, till the final version was nearly three times as long. These additions were chiefly analytical and expository. It is as if Monet's style had been replaced by Cézanne's.

Had Proust written seven novels instead of rewriting one novel in seven books, we should have assisted happily at the development that like every artist he underwent. But we now have, as it were, fragments from *The Portrait of a Lady* interspersed with fragments from *The Ambassadors*. The result is not a carefully unified construction like St. Paul's, but a rambling edifice, like the cathedrals of Le Mans or Canterbury. The purist has excellent reason to complain that this alteration of technique and conception has marred the aesthetic unity of the book. Yet I believe that much more has been gained than lost. Since I read M. Feuillerat's book, I fancy that I can very often distinguish, in the later parts of which the first draft is not available, whether I am reading Proust's first or second manner. (M. Feuillerat has done very ingenious detective work on these lines.) But this does not impoverish the experience I derive from the book. It is perhaps even appropriate that Time should thus have altered and striated a book of which Time is the subject.

Proust's intention from the first was to express the modification in character, in both the individual and society, continually being wrought by the passage of the years. The self of to-day, which can hardly understand the self of twenty years ago, will in turn be a mysterious stranger to the self of twenty years hence. To treat this theme he planned his book in the form of a man remembering, until at the end he suddenly receives the inspiration to make of these memories a work of art. (The book is described as the history of a vocation.) The scheme enabled the author to include everything that interested him. Thus in him we find not only a creator of character, a painter and an analyst, but as it were a diarist or memoir-writer, like the Goncourts and St. Simon. We listen to the meditations and discoveries of a man conspicuous for intelligence and perceptiveness, for knowledge and aesthetic sensibility.

Proust was no less difficult than devoted as a friend—touchy, plaintive, suspicious, excessive in his demands, though incomparably sympathetic, generous and intuitive. But to the reader he becomes a friend who has no fault—unless it be an occasional tendency to prosing about his unhappy amours, a friend to whom we listen enraptured as to the most rewarding talker there has ever been.

Time, as Proust would have expected, does alter our feelings about his book. If it has turned Mr. Connolly's *engouement* to tedium and disillusion, I find my own love not diminishing but focusing on different aspects. Like most of my friends, when I first read Proust, I was impressed chiefly by the delineation of love and jealousy. To-day I revolt against his notion that love is always and necessarily unhappy, and still more against his obsession with jealousy. On the other hand I have come to think him one of the supreme comic writers, the Molière or Ben Jonson of the novel. The reader that I used to be discovered in Proust the reflection of his own preoccupations; the reader I have come to be discovers a reflection of his own detachment. Just as I now become impatient with Proust's anguish over incidents that he suspects in Albertine's past, so to-day I cannot understand how once I allowed myself to be made miserable so fruitlessly. (Proust's elaborate diagnosis of love as a malady of the imagination seems to me definitely an addition to knowledge.) On the other hand *Le Temps Retrouvé* now seems to me, as it did not before, at least as valuable as any other volume, because the present "I" is approaching Proust's age, and can perceive the astonishing justice of his remarks about the disappearance of youth, the strange effect of superimposed memories, and the other consequences of the passage of time. The descriptions in this volume of the war, incidentally, have a new interest, and one re-reads more appreciatively the comments upon the black-out, sirens, pessimism, searchlights, love in shelters and Mme. Verdurin brimming with inside information.

Proust's pursuit of truth was deflected by a grotesque and glaringly subjective misanthropy, which grew on him unceasingly. Not only do all the characters deteriorate as they grow older, but—as M. Feuillerat has shown—the interpolated comments upon them are consistently disobliging. Fools become knaves, an action originally described as kind is given a base motive. Proust had never believed in mutual love, and in his later years fell into the illusion that there were no such things as gratitude or friendship. The cause, I suggest, was that he had too much heart. No friend could live up to the extravagant standards that Proust expected and did in fact himself maintain. Compared with him, everybody did turn out to be insensitive, self-centred and heartless. At last he seems positively to have revelled in what seemed to him the unkindness of his friends, rather as Charlus wished to believe that the harmless shop-assistants and waiters whom he found in Jupien's house were pimps and assassins. His bitterness and disappointment overflowed through countless codicils into every crevice of his work. Apart from his mother and grandmother (who stand like a Greek chorus or donors in an altar-piece outside the action), and from Elstir and Vinteuil (who play small part except as authors of their works), there is not one personage in the book who is ordinarily decent. I am not referring to the way in which Proust, with a lunatic destructiveness, suddenly decided that the most improbable characters in his book were homosexual: this may be taken as a symbol of his disappointment with friendship, but I think it rather the unlucky result of his own sexual obsessions, which increasingly persuaded him that his tastes were almost universal. An extravagance, which M. Feuillerat justly compares with Balzac's, grew upon Proust, as in the seclusion of his cork-lined room he pinned page upon page on to his old manuscript. The world of his imagination grew increasingly remote from actuality, its personages larger than life, their behaviour more chimerical. For my part, while I deplore the misanthropy, I enjoy the fantasy: it is in the great comic tradition to invent monsters.

Proust's interest in his characters is so passionate and infectious that one can accept the improbabilities and overlook the misanthropy. The main obstacle to the enjoyment of Proust is Albertine. We have all we need of jealousy and unhappy love in the amours of Swann, Saint-Loup and Charlus. What is worse, Albertine is the one impalpable character. She has no marks of identity; her eyes vary between blue and black, she is plebeian and bourgeois, ignorant and cultivated, impulsive and a mistress of dissimulation. One concludes that she is at least a couple of girls as well as half a dozen young men, a composite but unintegrated portrait of all the adolescents with whom the author had fallen in love. If all that concerns her were removed, we should lose some very beautiful passages, some rich comedy, and many profound observations, but the book, I believe, would be much improved. Indeed, to anyone about to embark upon Proust—and what voyage could be more delightful?—I should recommend reading *Swann's Way*, then going straight to *The Guermantes Way* and *The Cities of the Plain*, reading of *The Captive* only the long description of the party at the Verdurins' for Morel, and then passing to *Time Regained*. After this, the reader will wish to tackle the omitted parts, and will find in them many rewards that he might have missed if he had read them in their appointed place. This

may seem a barbarous way of approaching a masterpiece; but the truth, at least as I increasingly see it, is that literature is a very impure art, to which the rigidly aesthetic criterions that apply to painting, and even more to music, can be applied only with a great sacrifice of pleasure.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

KING LEOPOLD

Was Leopold a Traitor? By ROBERT GOFFIN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8s. 6d.

The Prisoner at Laeken. By EMILE CAMMAERTS. *Cresset Press.* 10s. 6d.

A year late we learn the truth about the tragedy of Belgium, not from the Ministry of Information, but from a Court of Law. All the better so, since British Law Courts cannot be considered vehicles of propaganda. The libel case brought by Sir Roger Keyes against the *Daily Mirror* vindicated the behaviour of Sir Roger himself and showed that King Leopold did not deserve the vile opprobrium thrown against him last summer.

These attacks were based on the extraordinary statements of Reynaud, the French Prime Minister. Some of them, notably a violent onslaught by Mr. Lloyd George, were unjustifiably violent in any case, but it is to be remembered that Reynaud stated that King Leopold surrendered without giving any warning to Britain or France. No one at that time, even those most willing to make allowances, conceived that the French Prime Minister was, in fact, simply lying in order to switch attention from France's share of the responsibility for the collapse in Flanders. Only now do we learn that King Leopold took every precaution to inform his allies that he would be compelled to surrender, and that his messages were duly received in Paris and London but never reached British headquarters in Belgium.

The whole tragic story is told in much detail both in *Was Leopold a Traitor?* and *The Prisoner at Laeken*. M. Goffin was an influential Belgian journalist who had strongly opposed Leopold's pre-war appeasement policy; his testimony is all the more useful. His description of the German drive through Belgium gives a vivid if confused impression of the utter rout and the complete helplessness of the Belgians. He adds details that are new (at least to me), when he describes how German bombers with full information of the exact position of every Belgian aeroplane systematically destroyed the entire Belgian air force as it lay on the ground. So perfect was the timing and organisation that some 800 planes must have been destroyed in a single quarter of an hour. He describes, too, the brilliant capture of the Belgian key fortress at Eben-Emael, a precise model of which had apparently been built in Poland during the preceding winter, so that a special group of German parachute troops, who had been rehearsing this particular assault in the most minute detail, were quickly able to capture it. M. Goffin amply confirms stories of German espionage and Fifth Column work in Belgium, but the upshot is only once again to emphasise that soldiers and civilians alike are utterly helpless against a modern war machine unless they have adequate air support. Ants may be brave insects, but their individual characteristics are not significant if men stamp on them with heavy boots.

M. Cammaerts has written a more elaborate and less journalistic vindication of Leopold. He treats the story as a historian dealing with the birth of a "legend." He is, of course, easily successful in exposing the legend of Leopold's treachery and he builds instead a sympathetic picture of the boy who saw war and the invasion of his country when he was only thirteen, who worshipped his father, and manfully maintained the same heroic tradition. When M. Cammaerts argues out the case of Belgium in a series of conversations with British critics he gives, I think, a very fair answer to much of the criticism of Leopold's pre-war policy. After all, the champions of appeasement were British and French ministers who deliberately discarded "collective security" and made Belgium's position as a Locarno Power impossibly precarious. He has a good answer, too, to the usual criticism that Belgium and Holland would engage in no staff conversations with the Allies. Where I am unconvinced is in his analysis of King Leopold's character. At the time when vilification of Leopold, based on Reynaud's statement, was general in this country, I talked to several people who had known Leopold and formed a more complex impression than that presented by M. Cammaerts. Dismissing the views that Leopold was a Fifth Columnist or coward, I wrote of him as a figure whose tragedy might some day form the basis of a great play dealing with the dilemma of the civilised ruler in this uncivilised society. Is M. Cammaerts sure that I was wrong in suggesting that he was "in reaction against his father's romantic nationalism in the last war," that he suffered from the confused pacifism of a generation which has known war, that he was influenced in an anti-democratic direction by his detestation of the "Popular Front" in France, the muddle of Belgian politics and by his close contacts with Fascist Italy? Perhaps we have not yet the material for a full answer, but my impression is that M. Cammaerts' book, excellent corrective as it is, does less than justice to the complexities of Leopold's character and to the dilemma which reached its tragic climax after the German invasion, but which had really made his life a misery for years before the war began.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

A SPANISH CHILDHOOD

The Forge. By ARTURO BAREA. Translated from the Spanish and with an introduction by SIR PETER CHALMERS MITCHELL. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

Looking back upon our childhood we find a country so vivid and so exceptional that, when we come to reminiscence, we yield to no one. The astonishing aunts and uncles, the astounding dramas of childhood are ours alone; no one else had anything like our houses, our tables, chairs, streets and journeys. For the rest of our lives they are the one subject on which we can talk for hours and sometimes rather well, for the one track mind, the animal eye, all the animal senses of childhood make us poetical realists.

Still, one gets as sick of childhood autobiography as one does of novels. Their palette is boringly simple. Even successful renderings of the child-mind pall, for it is only half a mind and its naiveties are tedious. The lasting autobiographies of childhood are not the commonest kind which concentrate on the author's miraculous first person singular, but those which describe a strange background, which uncover ways of life which we have wanted to know more intimately, or which are concerned with a situation, or a social picture, and Señor Barea's autobiography is readable for many of these reasons. The scene and the situation it describes are far more important than the little wonder himself; and it is in fact clear from Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell's introduction, that Señor Barea's own life did not become an unusual subject until he grew up and after the period described in this book had ended.

The scene is Madrid and the villages around it from 1896 to 1914. The way of living is that of the poor; the situation is that of the poor boy of talent who is rising in the world and has one foot among the workers and the other among the white collar class. His mother was left a widow without money and earned a pittance as a washerwoman and as a servant in her richer sister's house. Their relatives were hard-working peasants from Brunete and the country around who had managed to keep clear of the village moneylender. Though the boy was badgered by the differences between slum life and country life, slum poverty and country poverty, though he had to listen all day to acrimony and anxiety about money, food and clothes and was made to feel bitterly his humiliation as a charity boy at school, his life had the rich freedom which the city streets give to children. His mother's lot was, on the other hand, dreary and tragic. Penniless, she had to submit when her children were taken from her. The adored son was the centre of cruel battle between her sister and herself for years. This sister was a frightful woman, a disappointed childless creature who had taken to bitter and lachrymose religion. She was mean, vinegarish, hysterical, unscrupulous. She was perpetually praying and telling her beads and she used every pretext to get her nephew away from his mother. Education was the blackmail used. "If the boy lives with me he will be well-educated." The mother was edged out of the flat at night and sent to her garret, the boy was kept back to sleep with his aunt and uncle. Often in the middle of night he would creep out of bed with the connivance of his uncle and go back to his mother. Later on in his life when he stood up against his aunt, refused to be educated by charity and went to work in a draper's shop, she used to stand outside in the street making scenes and begging him to return. Her passion was pitiable and morbid. It has been said that Spaniards have no nerves, though often one's impression in Spain is of travelling among a nation of nervous wrecks, victims perhaps of the frantic intensity, the appalling hatreds and quarrels, of Spanish family life. There is a high price to be paid for being primitive.

The accidents of his early life made the boy aware of the virulence of the class situation in Spain; one moment he was in the camp of the poor, the next in the camp of the relatively well-to-do. His peasant relatives thought him a softie because he was well dressed and clever. Was the slave on the clerk's stool straining to reach the giddy income of £3 a month by the time he was forty, any better off than the hungry and unlettered peasant in the grip of the moneylender? At strategic points on the road to success in town and country were the Jesuits or their nominees. The Barea aunts and uncles were not very good Catholics and they were dominated by a blunt old grandmother who was a loud atheist. There is a wonderful scene after the aunt's death, when the will is being read, and when the outspoken old lady drives the priest out of the house. I am not sure how far Señor Barea (who became a socialist) keeps his religion, for he puts down facts without comment. There is a very touching friendship with a priest at the school and the priest explains how poverty and not his own vocation drove his parents to make a priest of him. There is little or no politics in the book, but it is the material of politics, a future of the things which were to grow and grow until, much later, they broke out in the Spanish civil war.

As a piece of writing *The Forge* has the strain of all books written in the historic present, a strain which is increased by the fact that Señor Barea is an unreflective writer. Each sentence is a photograph of things and until one gets used to his manner one has the sensation of having to look at all the individual bricks in a brick wall. This is the result of his desire to build up the alarming flat factual mind of a child as it grows, an aim which has lost its novelty. In one sense, as Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell points out, this insistence on things

4th edition is printing: but you should be able to get copy of 3rd from shop, stall, or library (12/6)

DODD'S DIARY

Dodd was U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1933-1938: this is the private diary he kept during his mission

"A whispering campaign against its accuracy was attempted in London, and I have been at some pains to hunt down and dispose of these detractions whenever they took a definite form. It is one of the frankest and most clear-headed accounts we are ever likely to have of the European drama during the past seven years. His outspoken comments on the Fascist sympathies of many upper-class British people are extremely illuminating"—*H. G. Wells*

"There can be no sort of doubt that it is certain to be one of the indispensable documents for the future historian of our time. . . . A lifting of the veil by one whose training and insight fitted him to understand the forces in play.... There is not a redeeming feature in these pages about the Nazi rulers. It is clear that they planned for war; it is clear that they wanted war. . . . No Englishman emerges with credit from these pages. Our first Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps, is aloof; the attitude of Sir Nevile Henderson has been defined in his own book. Lord Lothian, whatever he may have done later to retrieve his reputation, is, in these entries, the ardent friend of the Hitler system.... It is the story of a fantastic nightmare. My own inference from it is the simple one that it will always recur until the people charge themselves with their own destiny.... Ought to be read by every Socialist as an indispensable guide to the peace"—*Harold Laski* (*Tribune*)

"In entry after entry of this amazing diary he piled up evidence on the essentially warlike character of the Nazi regime. . . . During his time in Berlin he witnessed the evil flowering of Nazi barbarism—the murder and torture of political opponents and even innocent and politically non-interested workers, the excesses of anti-Semitism, and the purge of Roehm. Because Dodd was intensely human there is something of Pepys in this diary; because he had a passion for justice, and a sardonic eye, something of Voltaire; because he was a trained historian who saw with a maximum of objectivity, a touch of Gibbon of the 'Autobiography'" — *Cavalcade*

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as they present themselves unshaded to the eye, is characteristic of Spanish realism. There is a theory that the Spaniards got it from the Dutch, but it looks to me like a survival from a childish and more primitive culture. But once the mind has caught on, there is a pleasure in the solidity of Señor Barea's book and in its freedom from even the virtues of egoism which have become hackneyed in autobiography. His picture of the street life of Madrid is brilliant. Children of course know the streets and the folklore of a city better than anyone. Here are the beggars who sleep under the arches of the Opera house, not generalised beggars but living individuals with whom the child sits for hours. Here too is the claque leader and there is a fascinating account of his racket. The prostitutes come down in their kimonos to buy ribbon at the draper's (which stays open till nine or ten at night), the police officers swagger with their canes made of pieces of playing cards rammed tight on a strip of steel. Uncle Luis comes to the city to buy iron for his smithy, the peanut vendors are seen at home, the family gatherings take place in the cafés. One sees the queues at the popular confessionals. Señor Barea knows the differences of caste among washer-women, what it is that children fish for in sewers, the hundred and one ways in which people live by their wits and get meals for nothing without losing a hair of their dignity. There is not space to quote Señor Barea's long portrait of "the Marquis," the most importunate of beggars, but here is Gurius, the leader of the claque at the opera, a king of racketeers:

> The claque meets in the lounge of the Spanish Café. The leader is an Italian, an old singer who has lost his voice from drinking and smoking. His name is Gurius. His face is wrinkled with cosmetics, and people say of him that he could draw milk from a brick because he gets money out of everyone. Not only money, but all he needs to live. He has a way of his own in getting things. He catches hold of a singer in the street and kisses him, calling him "My dear! My very dearest!" Then he begins to talk in Italian very quickly without giving the other a chance of opening his mouth. Then, suddenly, he moves two steps away, looks him up and down and says, "My boy, do you know that we are exactly the same height and the same girth?" "Yes" says the other. "Then you must have a suit for me, not too much worn, for one must dress respectably." Next day he has got the suit because he is head of the claque and could ruin an artist. And so he gets boots, hats and shirts.

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V. S. PRITCHETT

CHINESE SENSE

With Love and Irony. By LIN YUTANG. Illustrated by KURT WIESE. *Heinemann.* 10s. 6d.

There is likely to be more agreement about the serious parts of Mr. Lin's book than about Mr. Lin as a humorist. He is (and this is appropriate, for Yu-tang means "hall of words") at his best when writing seriously and informatively about language, as in the chapters on Sex Imagery in Chinese and Basic English and Pidgin. About politics, even about the Japanese, he writes with scrupulous fairness and toleration. He is impatient with those who talk of "the end of civilisation" in Europe or China, and by civilisation he means, as most people do, the ways of life that he has liked and been used to. Perhaps he is rather too optimistic on this score. He says, for example, that there will always be gramophone records of classical music. But if the material they are made of were needed for purposes of killing, they would soon disappear. Mr. Herbert Read's "To Hell with Culture" line of optimism is much more tenable.

About Mr. Lin's levity there may be differences of opinion. One can imagine readers who would greet his sallies (on bed-bugs and so on) with "Isn't he killing?" Probably everyone who habitually calls humorists "killing" will delight unreservedly in this book. A few dour pedants may fail to be amused, and may also question Mr. Lin's capacity for noticing what goes on around him; for though he has lived in England he imagines that children "address their elders with 'Yes, Sirs,'" that if one told an Englishman one had taken a flat, the Englishman would reply, "Oh, dear, what a fall!" and oddest of all, that England's speciality is "always to do the right thing at the right moment"!

It would be unfair to say that Mr. Lin sometimes gets out of his depth (as, for example, in discussing Japanese literature, which he does without mentioning *The Tale of Genji* or the Nō plays). Rather he prefers, whatever topic he discusses, to remain comfortably in the shallows. His continual bias, indeed, is towards the sensible, the agreeable, the comfortable—a very rare state of mind, and one that makes his essays always sympathetic, despite their rather self-conscious flippancy.

A. WALEY

BIOGRAPHY

Frederick the Great. By PIERRE GAXOTTE. Translated by R. A. BELL. *Bell.* 15s.

Biography is in appearance, or rather as now practised, the easiest form of history-writing. There is an obvious beginning and end, and a thread to follow up between the two; there are incidents to relate, letters to quote, anecdotes to tell; of the "background" as much, or as little, is included in the picture as suits the author, and a different standard is set for the handling of political, diplomatic, military, economic, or other "technical" aspects—because, after all, this is a biography, and it is as such that it finds a ready public among those who fight shy of books dealing with historical problems, but want to read about "human beings." And how easily they seem satisfied! For real biographies, which make the human being their study, are exceedingly rare: as is best shown by the fact that no preparatory training is thought necessary for the work. What other highly technical and intricate subject would anyone so readily treat of without trying to derive some help from its general theory? A technique is now supplied by psychology, which has achieved a remarkable advance in the last fifty years, and should be recognised as an essential auxiliary science for a good deal of history-writing, and most certainly for biography. But the average biographer approaches his task like the girl who, when asked what qualifications she had for a children's nurse, answered that she herself had once been a child. There are few fundamental truths which a genius could not detect without the equipment essential to smaller men, and there is no equipment which inferior craftsmen do not put to a wrong and annoying use, but these are not valid arguments against learning the technique of one's trade. "Thank goodness the writing of biography is no trade and has no technique," the average biographer will exclaim; and this sentiment will be echoed by the majority of his readers. M. Gaxotte's book will be found very satisfactory by such people.

About half the book is devoted to the first 28 years of Frederick's life, before his accession, and the other half to his reign, which covered 46 years. The author says in his bibliography that of works on Frederick "the best beyond all comparison" are Lavisse's *La Jeunesse du Grand Frédéric* and *Le Grand Frédéric avant l'avènement*, "which render all mention of earlier works quite unnecessary." In the absence of footnotes the degree of his indebtedness to Lavisse is not obvious; but it is remarkable.

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Possibly there is little that can be added to the material presented by him with such supreme skill. But here the advance in technique ignored by men of M. Gaxotte's type—they cannot be called "a school"—comes in: Lavisse wrote 50 years ago; he was a great historian and a great writer, and there are few who could excel him in his own field, by his own methods; but there are psychological conclusions for forming which the material abounds, and which he was not able to clinch. Now this could easily be done; it is not done by M. Gaxotte.

Still, the story of a reign can be written with little attention to psychology and personality; for instance, Albert Sorel's *L'Europe et la Révolution Française* holds a foremost place in Napoleonic literature, without in any way being a biography of Napoleon. M. Gaxotte's book hardly aims at being a record of a great reign, as is shown even by the mere allocation of space between the periods before and after Frederick's accession. There is no really satisfactory account of him either as a general, or as a ruler and a statesman. The book is readable, but of no great value.

What does render it specially readable is the quality of its translation. The book does not read like a translation, but like the work of a good English writer. Should Mr. R. A. Bell translate another book, it is to be hoped that he will choose one of the great works of history for the object of his labours. But whatever book he translates, he should remember that there are certain references to this country which need to be checked. To give but one example: James Stuart-Mackenzie, the younger brother of the third Earl of Bute, appears in M. Gaxotte's book as "Lord Stuart-Mackenzie"; there never was such a title.

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I am not now concerned with the value of Basic English apart from literature, but who can need to read in Basic the Bible, which has been translated into the remotest dialects? Literature is not a series of statements, but a method of suggesting to the imagination more than can be made clear to the understanding. By the poverty of its vocabulary, and still more by the ineptness with which it is used, Basic English has turned the New Testament into something which has not even the value attaching to a lucid exposition of fact. One can only wonder what further havoc its sponsors are planning. Are we to have a Basic Shakespeare, with Macduff's "I cannot but remember such things were, which were most precious to me" turned into "I shall by force keep in mind these things, which were very highly valued by me"? Or a Basic Burns, with "Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonny bird" appearing as "You will wound my heart, you fair bird"?

One more quotation from the Basic New Testament, lest any reader may think this notice too severe: "And it came to Peter's mind how Jesus had said to him, 'Before the second cry of the cock, you will say three times that you have no knowledge of me.' And at this thought he was overcome with weeping."

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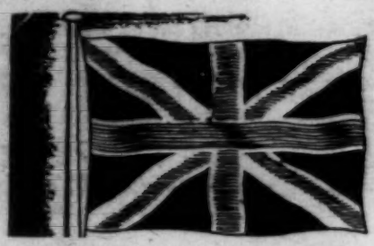

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GRAMOPHONE NOTES

DVOŘÁK: *Sextet in A*, op. 48. The Menges Sextet (Decca).

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in G*, op. 18, No. 2. Budapest String Quartet (H.M.V.).

MOZART: *Sonata No. 17 in D.* Eileen Joyce (Col.).

SCHUMANN: *Fantasiestücke*, op. 73, Nos. 2 and 3. Reginald Kell (clarinet) and Gerald Moore (piano), (H.M.V.).

CHOPIN: *Barcarolle*, op. 60. Moiseiwitsch (H.M.V.).

J. S. BACH: *Sarabande from French Suite No. 1*, and

J. C. F. FISCHER: *Passepied*, and

J. S. LOEILLET: *Gigue from Suite in G minor.* Alice Ehlers (harpsichord), (H.M.V.).

BRAHMS: *Waltz in A*, op. 39, No. 15, and

DVOŘÁK: *Slavonic Dance in E minor*, No. 2. Ida Haendel (H.M.V.).

WAGNER: *Die Walküre: Magic Fire Music*, Act 3. Stokowski and Philadelphia Orch. (H.M.V.).

WAGNER: *Die Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine.* Weingartner and Paris Conservatoire Orch. (H.M.V.).

WEBER: *Euryanthe Overture.* Chicago Symphony Orch. Cond. Frederick Stock (H.M.V.).

SVENDSEN: *Romance for Violin and Orchestra*, op. 26. Carlo Andersen, with Copenhagen Philharmonic Orch. Cond. Thomas Jensen (H.M.V.).

ENESCO: *Rumanian Rhapsody in A*, op. 11, No. 1. Detroit Symphony Orch. Cond. Kolar (H.M.V.).

SCHUBERT: "*Der Doppelgänger*" and "*Ständchen.*" Herbert Janssen and Gerald Moore (piano), (H.M.V.).

DUPARC: "*Chanson Triste*," and

PALADILHE: "*Psyché.*" Maggie Teyte (H.M.V.).

Traditional, arr. HUGHES: "*Down by the Sally Gardens*," and

COLERIDGE TAYLOR: "*She rested by the Broken Brook.*" John McCormack (H.M.V.).

THE Sextet in A, like the even earlier String Serenade, astonishes at the outset by reminding us of the comparative rapidity with which Dvořák became master of his own style. 1941 marks the centenary of his birth and should provide an excuse for doing justice to a composer whose fame has suffered from the over-popularity of some of his weakest work. I do not mean the "New World" Symphony, because that is both popular *and* a masterpiece; but the same cannot, with the best will in the world, be said of the *G flat Humoresque*, nor even of the Fourth Symphony, which like Mendelssohn's "Scottish"—displays the stodginess and timidity one might expect of work written, not to please the composer himself, but to conform to what the English were supposed to like. The Sextet, however, though emphatically not among Dvořák's finest inspirations, and though written (1878) after he had made the conquest of London with the Slavonic Dances, is neither timid nor stodgy, nor is it in the least Mendelssohnian. Brahms, with whom Dvořák had made friends in the previous year, is the influence, but more in the technical aspects than in that of the *materia musica*, which is perfectly individual. The first movement, in which there is always plenty going on to listen to, has that harmonic *glow* so characteristic of Dvořák at his most attractive. The Dumka which follows is less solemn in effect than the more famous later one, and may be compared to one of Chopin's graver Mazurkas, though of course the rhythm is different. For a Finale the variation-form provides the best get-out, when inspiration flags (and even when it doesn't); this set shows once again that, like Tchaikovsky and Brahms, Dvořák really knew his themes to the extent of being able to range beyond mere decoration without losing sight of his basic structure. The Menges Sextet give a straightforward and deliberate, but not a very detailed or *nuancé*, performance, to which the recording does full justice. And now please, Messrs. Decca or H.M.V., let us have the *Scherzo Capriccioso*, a delightful work which ought to be much better known.

Chamber music of the most "absolute" kind, which exhibits emotion quite purged of occasional dross, still seems to me, as I wrote at the beginning of the war, the best kind of music to soothe the savage breast. Those who agree with me should give first choice, this month, to the Beethoven *Quartet in G*. The whole of *opus* 18 has a quite peculiar interest in the history of music, and deserves a volume of commentary to itself. This Quartet seems to me perhaps the best of the bunch—for the epigrammatic beauty of its themes, the thrilling cleverness of its devices (note the allegro moment—it is no more—which, like yeast, "raises" the whole of the Adagio; and again the brilliant transition back from the Trio of the Scherzo to the first section), and the perfection of the quartet writing, shown particularly in the semi-contrapuntal Finale. Present generations are unlikely to hear better Beethoven renderings than those of the Budapest Quartet: this one is consummate. It is likewise a pleasure to be able once again to greet a performance by Miss Eileen Joyce in which the delicacy, distinction and accuracy of her playing show to their best effect. Every semi-quaver is given its exact value, yet the Alexandrine rhythm of the first movement never degenerates into "metre." Here is Mozart playing of a high order, without pedantry or affectation of classicism. Miss Joyce never allows the iron resonance of the modern piano to engulf the silvery four-part writing of this sonata (K576)—one of the best of a corpus a great deal of which is second-rate Mozart. The recording is quite outstandingly realistic.

The Schumann pieces for clarinet and piano deserve more frequent performance than they get. They are plumb in the middle of the romantic idiom, with the rhetoric all on the surface; yet they are not merely songs-without-words: the possibilities of both instruments are fully explored. No. 2 is a Mendelssohnian conversation-piece, No. 3 more characteristic of Schumann's fiery, rhapsodic oratory. The performance leaves nothing to be desired and the disc is a cheap one.

The rest of the chamber music this month is in the nature of bits and pieces. The *Barcarolle*, though one of Chopin's finest and most mature works, is here played in the manner I have so often inveighed against in these columns, *i.e.* with a constant, fierce *rubato* and withal so fast that the point of the title is altogether missed. A most unfortunate record. Miss Ehlers is a good technician and the pieces she has selected are worth attention; but her harpsichord would appear to be a heavy modern one—possibly from France; combines all the disadvantages of not being a piano with none of the advantages of the older instrument. Miss Haendel's latest disc can be recommended for the Dvořák excerpt alone, though I personally dislike so much *portamento*, even in Slavonic music. The Brahms Waltz loses hopelessly in translation, though one perceives the attraction, to a violinist, of all that double-stopping.

The greatness of Wagner can be measured just now by his power to carry us away, in spite of the odious associations with which the Nazi *Anschauung* has invested the whole business of The Ring. The question of concert-excerpts has been thrashed out elsewhere; but it should be obvious that, of the two just issued, the second is the more acceptable, since it is purely orchestral and tolerably complete as an episode. In the *Fire Music* one cannot help feeling the absence of Wotan's voice, though the performance and

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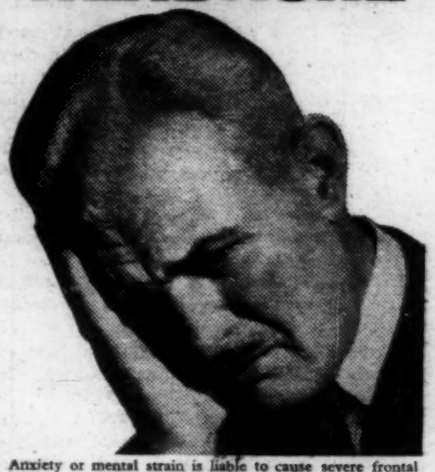

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recording of the orchestral version is extremely fine: the multiple strands of this tremendous tutti never get tangled, and that is much. *Siegfried's Journey* emerges even more brilliantly reminding us that no composer since Bach has known better how to manage a pedal-point. Weingartner squeezes the last drop of excitement out of the vivace section, which emits more sparks even than Loge's fire; and when at last the great river bursts into view, the orchestra gives us the whole landscape. A memorable record.

The overture remains the best thing in *Euryanthe*, in spite of the efforts of enthusiasts to refurnish this opera, the failure of which is always supposed to be due to its feeble libretto. In fact the latter is no more foolish than those of many most successful operas; on the other hand, a great deal of the music is rather dull and even the best of it ineffective in the dramatic sense. The new recording of the overture is on the harsh side; the violins sound rather bodiless and do not hold their own in the tuttis.

Svendsen's *Romance* appears, from the evidence of the *opus* number, to have been this charming composer's last work. Without being deeply original, it has the distinguished pathos of a gentle, retiring, idealistic nature. Connoisseurs of this kind of music will at once recall Chausson's lovely *Poème;* only the decoration of Svendsen's melody, on its recapitulation, betrays its Norwegian provenance. This is the jam of the concerto sandwich: one wishes the composer had added the bread. The performance makes one hope to hear more both of orchestra and soloist.

Enesco exploits a clever eclecticism in the manner of Baron Frédéric d'Erlanger. These sweetish cocktails soon sicken.

Janssen is a truly magnificent *Lieder* singer and this is, to my thinking, his finest record to date. Let those who think they have heard the *Ständchen* once too often, try this version; they will be astonished by the freshness and subtlety of this famous song. *Der Doppelgänger* is down another street—an essay in the symphonic style which Schubert might claim to have invented and which Wolf was to carry a step farther. It is as sinister as that other tragic and wonderful song, *Die Stadt*.

If the *Ständchen* is one of the world's great love-songs, *Chanson Triste* is surely another. I can find no words to express the beauty of Miss Teyte's rendering: here is a record in a hundred, in no circumstances to be missed. The piano part, which is no mere accompaniment, is wonderfully dovetailed with the voice. *Psyché* is smaller potatoes, yet in it we have probably the best of Paladilhe, whose operatic efforts (in the style of Massenet) became increasingly violent as failure succeeded failure; exploding at last in a setting of Sardou's melodrama, *Patrie*, which the composer was determined should succeed, and which did so—for a moment. Nevertheless *Psyché* shows a certain, if derivative, lyrical gift, and one is glad to have it.

The latest McCormack record calls for little comment. Exquisitely sung, the traditional air is simply moving; the other is rubbish.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 595

Set by Doll Tearsheet

The Anglo-Russian Agreement offers a rich material to the pencil of Low. The usual prizes are offered for the best suggestions for a cartoon—drawing and caption to be described in prose or verse.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, July 7th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 592

Set by William Whitebait

We offer the usual prizes for a ballad (limit 20 lines) on a war profiteer, a happy W.A.A.F., or a harassed leader-writer. This gives competitors the choice of being violent, carefree or compassionate, as they please.

Report by William Whitebait

This competition was meant to appeal to varied moods. Pens have been busy. They chirped, snarled or dropped a tear in large and fairly even numbers.

One "feature," as they say, was the number of R.A.F. men who sent in ballads to a Waaf. "Charles" describes—I don't know how realistically—a Waaf in the Psychology Department:

Her work was to interview airmen and find
The peculiar thoughts that they had in their mind,
And the further inside their subconscious she peered
The more the young airman seemed troubled and stirred.

After interviews ending in whispers she was dismissed the service, and married happily.

Michael Barsley's pair of Waafs are unorthodox to a fault:

Judy and Jennie were lovers,
But not in the usual way,
Though both had the same kind of training
And identical rates of pay.
They had no man
So they could do no wrong.

To offset these, Mr. Barsley sent in a second entry, a Waaf of the posters:

Oh gaze on lovely Chrystal,
She's a happy, hippy Waaf,
No puny form, but a uniform
And a hell of a hearty laaf.

I have no room to do more than mention H. W. Unna's Waaf "at the—drome near ——ford Town," who did a flit by moon——. On the whole, I conclude that Waafs are popular.

The Profiteer. This lesser quisling, "the ivy round England's oak," came in for some hard knocks and melodramatic lights. J. W. F. Hurford provided two profiteers as English as Pecksniff. One lived in New York and hated war.

He loved his country and he loved
His country's brave defenders,
And when they needed money he
Was first among the lenders.

And when he heard that shrapnel fell
And killed men from above,
He sent each man a helmet with
His invoice and his love.

He knows that those who strive to save
What others strive to shatter
Will not have time to speculate
On fat men getting fatter.

Those who preferred to grow fat at home usually joined the peerage, though some, I am glad to say, found an end on lamp-posts, while one fell among cornered eggs, and another, who was holding back buttons, found his trousers slipping down. A. King's "Profiteer, to the tune of *The Minstrel Boy*" is good for humming:

The profiteer to the war has gone,
In the ranks you will not find him.
His soaring prices he is thrusting on
To the wife the soldier left behind him.
"Land of mine, fight hard, work hard;
Though all the world betrays thee
My sword of gold thy right shall guard,
My mighty hoards shall praise thee."

Only one competitor in this class was kind; his profiteer, well-meaning and dazed by windfalls, landed in quod.

Lastly, the leader-writer. Guy Innes gave expression to doubts:

I wonder if the writer's art, so strenuously taught,
Is worth consideration as a vehicle of thought.

Ah, what avails the synthesis, the balanced epigram,
When all I have to say can be pin-pointed into "Damn!"

A. E. Coalbran indicated a course through the mine-fields of What Can't Be Said.

For him the far from jocund task
Of stripping from affairs their mask,
And showing his myopic flock
The naked soul of Poppycock.

He must contrive, though Heaven knows how,
To start a hare, yet not a row.
His statements must not irritate
His Public—or Directorate!

And worst of all, must satisfy
The High Priests of the M.O.I.

There was a high general level of entries. After several re-readings, the possible winners were narrowed down to: J. W. F. Hurford, T. Heath Joyce, Michael Barsley, W. F. White, Howard Whitten, Guy Innes, D. R. Milner, and A. E. Coalbran. There is not a great deal to choose between them, but I recommend that the prizes, pooled, be divided between T. Heath Joyce, Howard Whitten and D. R. Milner.

PRIZES (I)

THE HAPPY W.A.A.F.

Heigh-ho, the merry-o;
At dawn when the birds do sing
I rise, and away to work I go—
Left, right, left with a swing.
Then where the dawn comes softly stealing,
Oh, the joy of potato peeling:
Oh, the joy and the tenderness,
Scrubbing the floor of the Pilots' Mess:
Oh, me! Oh, my!
A happy little W.A.A.F. am I.

Ding-dong, a-ding-a-dong;
When twilight bedims the scene
My knight of the skies will come along
Into my sweet canteen.
Then where the fragrant beer is spilling,
Oh, the joy of his sausage grilling:
Oh, the joy of the washing up—
Touching the rim of his own dear cup:
Oh, me! Oh, my!
A Happy Little W.A.A.F. am I.

T. HEATH JOYCE

(II)

THE SAD STORY OF CALIBAN LEECH

This is the story of Caliban Leech
Who learned every lesson the war could teach.
Unmoved by the ebb and flow of crisis,
He swam on the tide of rising prices.

His fortune was made at the Black Market stall
In Earnest answer to Bevin's call.
He rose from the ranks to the elite of Supply,
Where he sold the commissions he couldn't buy.

A Knighthood soon adorned his name
But Sir Caliban sought further fame.
His nephew Stoat at the Board of Trade
Gave him the word—and he was made.

Lord Leech, completely self-made man,
Despised the former Caliban,
But torches, fish and building-sites
(Garnished with eggs) disturbed his nights.

He who controlled the Control of Prices
Relaxed to devise his heraldic devices,
Retired to campaign against E.P.T.
But got in the way of a large H.E.

HOWARD WHITTEN

(III)

THE HARASSED LEADER-WRITER

The night was black as a raven's back
And the wind, with a doleful wail
Through a yawning crack in the chimney-stack,
Would have made a strong man pale.

In the room below, where the smoke-fumes blow
And the gloom is scarcely lighter,
In the fading glow sits Fleet Street Joe,
The *Times'* fourth-leader writer.

"How, oh how can I write it now?"
He cries, with a groan of grief,
"With this beastly row, like a moaning cow,
And my heart like an aspen-leaf."

The skies rebound with a deafening sound;
The Heavens with lightning glow;
The walls all round crash down to the ground,
And bury the terror-struck Joe.

O, toll a knell for the man who fell,
For I am bitterly sorry;
Yet I'm happy to tell that he knew full well
Dulce est pro "Temporibus" mori.

D. R. MILNER

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE STOCK EXCHANGE AND OUR RUSSIAN ALLY—MAXWELL'S SHARES AND WARNER BROTHERS—STOCK EXCHANGE CHARTERS

THE Stock Exchange is queerly sentimental. The sight of once-prosperous members with the keenest capitalistic sense in the world bidding for defaulted Russian bonds—true, at only ½ per cent.—on the gallant fight of our Russian ally was somewhat pathetic. Why they should also bid for Anglo-Iranian Oil shares when the Germans consider that the quickest route to Iran is via Southern Russia and the Caucasus was more puzzling. But the war has become too much of a muddle for the Stock Exchange "bulls and bears" to see their way clearly. Prices tended, therefore, to mark time on this extension of the war, except in the "home railway" market, where the "bears" have about shot their bolt. Business in the gilt-edged market was desultory with the jobbers preoccupied with thoughts about inflation. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was asked in the House of Commons whether he was aware of the "inflationary dangers inherent in attempts to secure stability in the cost of living by subsidies from taxation and loans," he replied that it was the Government's policy to guard against such dangers by a variety of measures and in particular to create conditions to enable the wages situation "to be held about where it then was." But the Stock Exchange feels that there is no evidence that the wages situation is being held where it is or was. No limit has been set to the rise in wages, and it may be that City opinion, working through the Bank of England and the Treasury, will begin to force the Government into a stronger opposition to further wage increases.

A lot of nonsense has been talked about the proposed sale of the late John Maxwell shares in Associated British Pictures Corporation to Warner Brothers. It is suggested that it would be against the national interest if this cinema theatre circuit were to pass under the control of one of the big Hollywood Corporations. This is taken as an excuse to talk hot air about the cultural and propaganda value of the British film industry. First, it should be observed that Warner Brothers have made far better anti-Nazi propaganda pictures than all the British film companies put together. Secondly, as the Treasury has blocked the sterling balances of the American film companies, it would be unreasonable to stop the use of these balances for the purchase of British assets. From the Treasury point of view, it is all to the good if these balances are invested in sterling fixed assets, for, if they continue to mount up in liquid form at the present rate, it only means that the strain on sterling would be all the more severe when the blocking is removed. Thirdly, Warner Brothers are only one of the big American Corporations and their presence in this country as cinema owners would introduce healthy competition in this section of the industry. If, therefore, Warner Brothers want to own a show window for their pictures in Gt. Britain, let them pay Mrs. Maxwell a price for her 4,000,000 ordinary shares of 5s., which is well in excess of the present market price of 6s. The country will benefit as well as Mrs. Maxwell. It is rather nauseating to hear financial critics write up the value of Associated British Picture shares when they had not very much good to say about them when Mr. Maxwell was alive. I have no axe to grind for Warner Brothers but I am moved to make this protest because the press would almost have you believe that Warner Brothers are a German and not American firm.

This Stock Exchange! "Mr. Liddall, M.P., announces his intention of asking Sir Kingsley Wood whether he will put the Stock Exchange under a charter. . . . Presumably Mr. Liddall is unaware that when the Royal Commission was appointed to look into matters connected with the Stock Exchange *in* 1877, this matter of a charter was the subject of considerable attention. In the Royal Commission's report issued in 1878 various recommendations were made—many of them carried out in later years—but the suggestion of a charter received no support in the House. The Stock Exchange retains the freedom which, if a Royal Charter were granted to it, must inevitably suffer" (Autolycus in the *Financial Times*). I can assure Autolycus that if opinion inside the Stock Exchange has not changed in 63 years, outside it has been changing very rapidly. To-day, when every form of economic and financial activity is under some form of Government control or supervision, it is generally recognised that a Stock Exchange with no formal sense of responsibility to anyone but its own private members is an anachronism.

* * *

The announcement by Mr. Jesse Jones, Federal Loan Administrator, that he is considering a loan to the British Government to cover supplies ordered before the Lease and Lend Act, was received with sighs of relief in the City. It means that there will be no more distressed sales of our dollar assets. There has been a good deal of heart-burning over the sale of Courtaulds' interest in the American Viscose Corporation, which realised less than 50 per cent. of the net value placed on these American assets by a conservative valuation. Not only was this valuable British property sold at a great sacrifice, but the sale put nearly $8 millions of profits into the pockets of the American bankers.

Company Meeting

LONDON ASIATIC RUBBER AND PRODUCE

THE thirty-third ordinary general meeting of the London Asiatic Rubber and Produce Company, Limited, was held on Wednesday in London, Mr. H. J. Welch (the chairman) presiding.

In his address to the members the Chairman said: We have recently sold for £10,850 an outlying block of 266 acres of 33-year-old rubber on Diamond Jubilee estate, the soil of which was unsuitable for replanting.

If our recommendations concerning dividend, etc., are adopted the issued capital will then represent £30 1s. 11d. per planted acre. But it includes net surplus liquid assets of £340,092, so that the net cost is just over £19 per planted acre, the lowest ever recorded for the Company.

I shall be discussing the general position of our industry in my address to the members of the Rubber Plantations Investment Trust on the occasion of its annual meeting, and those interested can find a full report of that address in the *Times* of June 26th; or the secretaries of this company will gladly supply a copy on or after that date on request.

Our accountable crop for 1940 was 11,855,000 lb. against 8,231,000 lb. for 1939, and its average sale price was about 1d. per pound higher, but no less than £125,000 has been set aside for excess profits tax, reducing our credit balance for the year to £164,618.

The directors recommend transfers of £15,000 to general reserve and of an equal sum to raise the dividend equalisation reserve to £50,000. The latter will be used without hesitation when occasion arises. The final dividend of 6 per cent. recommended will make the total for the year 10 per cent., as in each of the last two years. The sum remaining to be carried forward will then be £83,033, or very slightly more than the figure of a year ago.

The forward sales made for 1941 amounted to 1,104 tons at prices averaging just over 11d. per pound London equivalent. No sales have been made for 1942 delivery.

The accounts were adopted unanimously.

B.Sc. ECON.

Enterprising men and women who wish to prepare for post-war opportunities should consider the possibilities of the London University B.Sc. Econ. degree. Not only is it a valuable qualification for those seeking teaching or administrative posts under Education authorities; it also opens the door to statistical, research and welfare work in commerce and industry. The degree is open to all, without university residence. You may prepare for it at home under the experienced guidance of Wolsey Hall, and tuition fees may be spread over the period of the Course. 309 Wolsey Hall students passed London B.Sc. Econ. (External) exams., 1925-40.

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STRATFORD-ON-AVON. Wanted, 2 furnished rooms for lady with girl of four. Full board or use of kitchen. Box 9460.

SUGGESTIONS reasonable accom. Portsmth., mother, b. & g. 10 & 12, b. school hols. or part. 118 Stakes Rd., Portsmouth.

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TWO bachelors wish furnished accommodation with service in Kensington or Hampstead district, preferably where contacts with young progressive people obtainable. Box 9423.

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By the courtesy of University College, Wales, the Psychological Department of University College, London, has transferred its laboratory and library to Aberystwyth. Full courses are available for intermediate, degree, and diploma examinations and for higher degrees by research. A Psychological Clinic has been opened for demonstrating methods of studying difficult, evacuated and raid-shocked children.

For further particulars apply: E. L. TANNER, Secretary, University College, London (Gower Street, W.C.1).

THE BEDFORD PHYSICAL TRAINING COLLEGE, 37 Lansdowne Road, Bedford. Principal: MISS STANSFELD. Students are trained in this College to become teachers of gymnastics. The course of Training extends over 3 years. Fee £165 per annum. For prospectus apply SECRETARY.

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UNITY Theatre's new play. "Dostigaeff and the Others," by Maxim Gorki. Every Saturday at 6, and Sunday at 3 and 6 o'clock. Euston 5391 and 2381. 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d. Membership fee 2s. Box Office, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. week-days, 2 p.m.–6 p.m. Sundays.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, W.2. Sunday Services at 11.30. June 29th. H. J. BLACKHAM: "THE WAGES OF SIN."

LONDON LABOUR PARTY LECTURES. E. F. M. DURBIN, M.A. (Author of *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*) on "ECONOMIC PLANNING WITHOUT TOTALITARIANISM" at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on next Wednesday, July 2nd, at 7 p.m. Chairman: Dr. W. H. GREEN, M.P. Admission Free.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, Sunday, June 29th, at 11 a.m. RT. HON. LORD SNELL, C.B.E.: "A SANE CURE FOR THE ILLS OF A MAD WORLD."

CONFERENCES

THE PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE (formerly F.P.S.I.) are holding a summer conference at Frensham Heights School, Frensham, near Guildford, Surrey, from August 2nd to 9th. The lecturers will include Aneurin Bevan, W. B. Curry, Kenneth Ingram, C. E. M. Joad, John Katz, Krishna Menon and Olaf Stapledon. Charges: Members £3 15s., Non-members £4. Those wishing to have further details will be sent full particulars as soon as the programme is complete. As a large number of reservations have been already accepted, these applications for particulars will be dealt with in the order of receipt. Apply to Hon. Secretary, 49 Nassington Road, London, N.W.3. Tel.: Hampstead 2969.

EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE.
The National Froebel Foundation are holding a week-end Conference at Knebworth House, Knebworth, Herts., September 12th–15th, 1941.
Subject: "RECONSTRUCTION IN EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE."
Speakers: MISS GWEN CHESTERS, PRINCIPAL NICHOLSON, PROFESSOR BRIAN STANLEY, DR. H. G. STEAD, etc.
For particulars apply The Secretary, 2 Manchester Square, W.1.

SUMMER SCHOOL

THE Fifth Roel Summer School of Puppetry will be held at Roel Farm in the Cotswolds from August 16th to 30th. Full particulars from OLIVE BLACKHAM, Eton House, Wellington Street, Cheltenham.

EXHIBITION

LEICESTER GALLERIES, Leicester Square. 10–5.30.
(1) VANESSA BELL—Paintings.
(2) FRANK DOBSON—Water-colours.
(3) ALGERNON NEWTON, A.R.A.—Paintings.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL

CROHAM HURST SCHOOL (For Girls)
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Recognised by the Board of Education. Safe area; beautiful surroundings; education is uninterrupted; highly qualified specialist staff; pupils entered for University Examinations. In addition to the usual subjects, gardening, poultry-keeping and riding are leisure-time activities. Boarders five to eighteen years of age (young children taken as war emergency). Fees moderate to suit existing conditions. Bursaries available.

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APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

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MATRON—WARTIME DAY NURSERY.
The Maternity and Child Welfare Committee of the Tottenham Borough Council invite applications for the post of Matron to their Vale Road Wartime Day Nursery at a salary of £200 per annum rising by annual increments of £8 to £216 (plus war bonus revision of which is under consideration); uniform provided and meals when on duty.
Candidates must be State Registered Children's Nurses and hold the certificate of the National Society of Day Nurseries or its equivalent and should have had at least one year's training in a Nursery Training College.
Candidates should be unmarried and not over 35 years of age at the time of appointment.
The successful candidate will be required to work under the general direction of the Medical Officer of Health who is the Executive Officer of the Committee.
The successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination by the Committee's Medical Officer, and will be required to contribute to the Superannuation Fund in accordance with the provisions of Local Government and Other Officers' Superannuation Acts.
Forms of application will be sent on receipt of a stamped addressed (foolscap) envelope to Dr. G. Hamilton Hogben, Medical Officer of Health, Town Hall, Tottenham, N.15, envelopes to be marked "MCW" and must be returned duly completed on or before Saturday, July 4th (first post).
M. F. DAVIDSON (Miss),
Clerk to the Committee.
Tottenham, N.15.
20th June, 1941.

CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON INSTITUTE.
ARTIST REQUIRED to run week-end life classes in drawing and painting at the City and Guilds of London Art School. Age not over 50; teaching experience desirable; artistic achievement and enterprise essential. Apply in writing to the Secretary, City and Guilds of London Institute, Gresham College, Basinghall Street, London, E.C.2.

BRIDGEND and Preston, Club Leader for big new club for young industrial workers. Salary £250 p.a. Leader-Organiser Birmingham, £200–£250, according to experience. Manchester, Club Development Organiser, £250 p.a. Westmorland, County Organiser, £250 p.a. In all cases experience in club work and of mixed activities essential. Applications with copies of three recent testimonials, to the Employment Officer, National Council of Girls' Clubs, Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, W.C.1. Closing date July 2nd, 1941.

WANTED, S.R.C.N. under 35 as sister in residential Nursery to be started on community lines in country for evacuated toddlers. Box 9457.

APPOINTMENTS—continued

COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.
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Applications are invited from qualified women for appointment as Assistant SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOL MEALS. The duties will be mainly connected with the provision of meals at School Canteens and other educational institutions, and the person appointed will be required to advise on questions of diet, staffing, equipment and general organisation. Candidates should have experience in large scale catering and expert knowledge of dietetics. An appropriate degree and experience of administration and organisation will be a recommendation. Salary £300–£15–£400. The post is pensionable. Married women are ordinarily ineligible.
Application forms, with further particulars and conditions of appointment, to be obtained from the Education Officer, County Hall, Wakefield, to whom they should be returned not later than Saturday, July 12th, 1941.

ASSISTANT Mistress required September, progressive Private School in Midlands. Married graduate with child welcomed. Junior Maths. with coaching to School Certificate essential. Apply Box 9436.

WANTED, domestic help to live with lively family. Refugee welcomed. Mother and child considered Good outings, easy post. Box 9431.

COMFORTABLE home in small country house 1½ miles High Wycombe offered for help with housework and with 2 children. Own bed-sitt. rm. 17s. 6d. a week pocket-money. Good food and plenty of freedom. Live with family. Box 9427.

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CAMBRIDGE graduate in English (23), C.O. registered for teaching, wants job in progressive school; experienced; salary preferred but not essential; or some work. Box 9459.

POST wanted mid-July, assist. matron, housekpr., or nursery-school tchr. in school, hostel or nursery-school. Refugee, 28, Kindergarten-teacher, exp., domesticated, typing. Box 9461.

EXPERIENCED business executive (woman), German, French, Dutch, Spanish, sound knowledge chemical market, requires progressive post. Box 9467.

SCHOOLMASTER (41) seeks post; also for holidays; scholar of Eton, B.A. Oxon. Box 9435.

OXFORD B.A., 27, medically exempt, several years reactionary teaching exp., seeks post prog. school Sept. Box 9438.

WOMAN (24), experienced secretary shorthand typist, seeks interesting work of any kind, anywhere. Box 9426.

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